

U.S. troops approach Baghdad, accelerate slaughter in Iraq

Washington deploys another 100,000 soldiers, as U.S. rulers debate military strategy

Stop imperialist assault on Iraq! Troops out now!

As the Anglo-American invasion forces escalate their slaughter in Iraq, billionaire businessmen from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and other

EDITORIAL

imperialist countries are fighting over the anticipated spoils of “reconstruction” in

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Union official speaks in Midwest on fight against deportation

BY JOE SWANSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—“The fight against the bosses in the plants for workers to have unions, and the defense of immigrants such as Róger Calero, are all part of the same fight for working people today,” said Bill Pearson at a March 19 fundraising event here. “Meetings such as this one are also part of this process.” Pearson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 in South St. Paul, Minnesota, was on a two-day tour of Iowa and Nebraska to build support for the fight against the deportation of Calero. The union official is also a national co-chair of the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

Calero, 34, is an editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language monthly published in New York, and a *Militant* staff writer. A native of Nicaragua, he has lived in the United States since 1985 and has been a permanent resident for 13 years. On December 3 of last year he was returning home to the United States from reporting

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‘Militant’ subscription drive begins

BY PAUL PEDERSON
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Socialist workers in meatpacking, garment and textile, and coal mining industries met in New York March 24 to discuss and plan a working-class response to imperialism’s assault on Iraq and the deepening world depression. They decided to

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A U.S. paratrooper, above, of 173rd Airborne Division near Harir airfield, northern Iraq, March 30. As U.S. forces approach Baghdad, massive aerial bombings have wreaked havoc in Iraqi capital. Many civilians have been killed from U.S. missile strikes, as in the one on right.



75,000 march in Washington, D.C., in defense of affirmative action



Militant/Sam Manuel

April 1 march to defend affirmative action, threatened in Michigan university case.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Chanting, “Education is our right! By any means necessary we will fight” and “Separate but equal is a lie! Affirmative action will never die!” some 75,000 people, mostly Black students, rallied and marched in support of affirmative action here April 1. The largest contingents came from the universities of Michigan and Ohio. “We brought over a dozen buses,” said Laura Bunting, a law

student at the University of Michigan.

The protest targeted the Supreme Court on the day it began hearing arguments in two cases challenging the University of Michigan’s admissions policy. The university uses race as one criterion in judging applicants. Participants in the march recognized the case as an attack on affirmative action gains.

“We can’t let them take away our rights,” said Brenda Hollis from nearby

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Moving toward a ground assault on Baghdad, U.S. invasion forces have stepped up their attack on Republican Guard troops on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital while conducting a brutal bombing campaign that has killed or maimed thousands of residents of this city. U.S. commanders have also shifted some of their troops to several cities in southern Iraq to

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Wisconsin meat packers’ strike is solid

BY TOM FISKE

JEFFERSON, Wisconsin—“We didn’t go on strike just for 470 people. We’re on strike for all the workers in the state and the United States. We will win this strike in the communities and country as a whole.” This is how John Hernandez, a member of the negotiating committee of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 538, described the strike against Tyson here March 29. He was speaking to 250 people at the second solidarity rally of the month-long strike. Expressing the determination of many, he led chants with “We’re in the fight of our

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Bowie State University. She was part of the nearly 2,000 students from historically Black universities and colleges throughout the southeast who had held a rally in support of affirmative action at Howard University the night before.

Red T-shirts made a large contingent from United Auto Workers Local 600 in Dearborn, Michigan, stand out in the crowd. “They’re trying to take back gains we fought for many years ago,” said UAW member Shirley Hynes. A busload of the

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Thousands march for affirmative action

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unionists had ridden all night.

The day-long protest action was organized by student groups on campuses across the country under the umbrella of the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action and Integration and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN). It was endorsed by a wide range of prominent national organizations, among them the NAACP; National Organization for Women; United Auto Workers; United Food and Commercial Workers; Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; League of United Latin American Citizens; and the National Black Law Students Association.

As the Supreme Court heard arguments in the Michigan cases, a new front opened up in the attack on affirmative action. The so-called Center for Equal Opportunity and the American Civil Rights Institute, two groups that back the legal challenges to the University of Michigan’s affirmative action policies, sent out letters to about 30 universities stating that provisions in their scholarship and academic awards programs discriminate against students who are white. Five universities have indicated they will weaken their affirmative action policies or cancel the programs.

This month, under pressure from its state attorney, the board of Virginia Polytechnic Institute decided to eliminate virtually all of its affirmative action programs. The decision was met with widespread and vociferous protests from students and faculty, forcing the board to reconsider.

The administration of President George Bush filed a brief with the Supreme Court supporting the efforts to challenge the University of Michigan affirmative action policies. Bush made the announcement in a January 15 national television address, arguing that the school’s admission policies “amount to a quota system that unfairly rewards or penalizes prospective students based solely on their race.” Affirmative action quotas, he said, “create another wrong, and thus perpetuate our divisions.” Bush made these statements in the wake of the firestorm resulting from the racist remarks by former Senate majority leader Trent Lott, who had praised the 1948 seg-

regationist presidential ticket headed by Strom Thurmond.

The current assault on affirmative action builds on the accelerated attacks on it throughout the 1990s, mostly during the eight years that Democrat William Jefferson Clinton was in the White House.

Clinton’s ‘mend, not end’ policy

Cheryl Hopwood and other students filed a legal challenge against the affirmative action admissions policy at the University of Texas law school in 1992. The university prevailed in the lower courts but *Hopwood*, as the case came to be known, won on appeal in 1996. The Fifth Circuit court ruled that *any* consideration of race in admissions is unconstitutional.

In 1995, Clinton ordered a review of federal affirmative action programs. In a nationally televised address saying that his policy would be to “mend, not end” affirmative action, Clinton made it clear that the review would target policies that gave force to affirmative action, such as any kind of numerical quotas “in theory or practice.”

Two years later, the federal appeals courts lifted an injunction by a lower court in California against a ballot initiative that banned the use of affirmative action in education and employment. Following the passage of Proposition 209 in November 1996, thousands of students had staged demonstrations, marches, and building occupations, forcing a lower court to impose the injunction against its implementation.

Gains out of titanic civil rights battles

The initial gains in affirmative action developed out of the titanic civil rights battles of the 1950s and ’60s that overturned the Jim Crow system of legal segregation in the South. The civil rights movement quickly challenged the broader racial discrimination faced by Blacks in every corner of the country and in all its forms, including higher education.

These battles forced President Lyndon Johnson, a Texas segregationist and a Democrat, to sign the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which includes Title II barring racial discrimination in “public accommodations,” and Title VII, prohibiting discrimi-



Militant /Lou Howort

United Auto Workers contingent with banner at April 4, 1978, protest in Washington, D.C., against Bakke lawsuit attacking affirmative action.

nation in employment on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, or national origin. In 1965 Johnson signed Executive Order 11246, which banned discrimination in federal employment and hiring by federal contractors. In 1969, President Richard Nixon, a Republican, in an effort to quiet demands that affirmative action be given teeth, issued an order establishing “goals and timetables” for hiring Black workers by companies holding federal contracts.

These laws codified what was won on the ground through mass actions, and provided the legal basis for affirmative action drives led by oppressed nationalities and women. Thousands of lawsuits were filed to break down hiring barriers. Women continued to fight their way into basic industry, which meant higher wages and greater unionization. At the same time, however, these gains began to be challenged in the courts.

Allan Bakke, an applicant to the University of California Davis medical school, sued the university in 1974, claiming to be a victim of “reverse discrimination.” Bakke argued that he was denied entrance to the medical school while “less qualified” applicants had been admitted under an affirmative action program that set aside 16 slots for students from oppressed nationalities.

In the face of protests across the country, often led by Black and Chicano student organizations, the court was deeply divided with four justices voting for Bakke and four against. The deciding opinion was handed down by Justice Lewis Powell. He wrote that because the state has a “compelling interest” in “diversity,” race could be used as one factor among many in the university’s affirmative action program. But the decision also snatched the teeth out of the program by declaring that the affirmative action quota system at the university “discriminated” on the basis of race and was therefore illegal. The university was ordered to admit Bakke.

One of the most significant cases in defense of affirmative action in the labor movement was the *Weber* challenge.

In 1974 the employers in the basic steel

industry signed a court-ordered consent decree to establish a plant-wide seniority system. That meant workers hired into departments with the worst pay and job conditions would bid into jobs in other departments without losing seniority. The agreement also set hiring goals for women, and skilled craft apprenticeship goals for women, Black, and Latinos.

The Weber case

Kaiser Aluminum Corporation signed a contract with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in 1974 stipulating that one female worker or member of an oppressed nationality be hired into the training program for craft jobs for every white male admitted. Until then the company had only hired workers with prior craft experience. Blacks had long been excluded from those types of jobs. At the Gramercy, Louisiana, Kaiser plant, for example, Blacks held only five of the 273 craft jobs—1.8 percent—although they made up about 39 percent of the workforce.

The same year Brian Weber, a lab technician at the Gramercy plant, filed a lawsuit to overturn the affirmative action plan, claiming it constituted “reverse discrimination” giving unfair advantage to Black and women workers.

When a U.S. district court ruled in favor of Weber in a 1976 trial, the Kaiser bosses ended the training program for all workers. The Steelworkers and other major unions as well as the AFL-CIO put their weight behind the battle to overturn the *Weber* decision. This led to the Supreme Court overturning of the ruling in 1979.

The defeat of the *Weber* challenge strengthened the USWA and marked a big victory for all working people. But the establishment of plant-wide seniority by the consent decree did not address discrimination in layoffs.

During economic downturns affirmative action gains can be wiped out as women, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities often become the “last hired, first fired.” This is part of how affirmative action gains were undermined in the quarter century that followed.

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U.S. gov’t warns Iran, protesters fill Tehran

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The Iranian government has placed its military on full alert and stationed more troops and artillery along the country’s western border with Iraq in face of provocations by the U.S. and British forces invading its neighbor. On March 28, hundreds of thousands took to Tehran’s streets, the first major demonstration in Iran against the imperialist assault since Washington launched its slaughter of the Iraqi people.

Missiles, ostensibly aimed at targets in Iraq, have struck towns and areas across the border in Iran. U.S. and British warplanes have repeatedly violated Iran’s airspace in defiance of the Iranian government’s order declaring its territory off limits to the imperialist invaders.

Washington continues to publicly build its case—and privately prepare—for war against Iran. U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld accused Tehran March 28 of supporting Iranian “proxies” inside Iraq, which his forces will treat as enemy combatants.

In response, Tehran, which had been cautious so far in its statements on the U.S.-led invasion next door, began to adopt a more openly hostile stance. Iran’s foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi told a March 30 news conference in Tehran that his government “will not support a government in Baghdad installed by America.” The invaders, Kharrazi stated, “thought they would be welcome in Iraq, but Iraqi people are greeting them with suicide attacks.... The U.S.-led forces miscalculated the situation. It appears that more difficult days await the invading forces.”

Rumsfeld had threatened two days earlier that the Badr Corps, an Iraqi Shiite Muslim militia with forces in northern Iraq, will be “treated as combatants” by the U.S.-led forces and “we will hold the Iranian government responsible for their actions.”

The Badr Corps is a militia with ties to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SICRI), based in the Shia population. They are comprised of about 15,000 fighters, some based in two areas of northern Iraq and most living in exile in Iran. The force has a history of conducting operations against the Saddam Hussein regime, primarily confined to sabotage, assassination attempts, and guerrilla warfare.

While claiming the mantle of the “liberator” of the people of Iraq, Rumsfeld made it clear that resistance to the Hussein regime by this group is unwelcome. Since it is “not under the direct operational control of [U.S.] General [Thomas] Franks,” the Badr Corps “will be taken as a potential threat to coalition forces,” Rumsfeld declared.

“We don’t see the need to get a permission from the Americans to topple the oppressive regime in our country,” said Mohsen Hakim, a leader of SICRI. “Badr Brigade includes children of Iraqi people. It has been fighting in the past 20 years to see the fall of the Iraqi regime.”

Iranian government officials dismissed Washington’s warnings. “Rumsfeld is making propaganda to cover up his lack of success in this war,” Iranian government spokesman Abdullah Ramazanzadeh told Reuters March 29. “We won’t go into this meaningless war, neither for or against either side.” He added that “The Badr Brigade’s decisions have nothing to do with Iran. They are independent, like any other Iraqi opposition group.”

About 100 U.S. Special Forces troops, along with 10,000 Kurdish fighters, reportedly attacked and took over several villages in northeastern Iraq near the Iranian border March 28. Intensive bombing by mortars, artillery, B-52’s, and fighter jets accompanied the assault. The villages were supposedly controlled by Asnar, an Iraqi group that allegedly carried out suicide bombing attacks against the invading forces the previous week. Reports in the big-business media insinuate the group has ties with Iran.

On the same day, the *Financial Times* of London reported that the Pentagon is quietly compiling a list of non-U.S. companies with investments in Iran’s energy sector, some of which are based in countries that are part of Washington’s “coalition of the willing.” Oil companies, including Shell of the UK, Eni of Italy, and TotalElfina of France, would be barred from U.S.-awarded contracts for the “reconstruction” of Iraq.

While its bombs and missiles wreak havoc on Iraq’s infrastructure, Washing-



ISNA/Morteza Farajabadi

Hundreds of thousands protest in Tehran March 28 against U.S.-led assault on Iraq and escalating threats against Iran.

ton is already looking for bidders on the first such contract, worth \$900 million. Five U.S. firms are being considered.

The blacklist will “kill two birds with one stone” says an anonymous expert quoted in the article—enriching U.S. companies while at the same time fueling Washington’s war drive against Iran.

Iran’s energy industry has been at the cen-

ter of the growing imperialist war campaign against Iran. Washington is targeting Tehran’s efforts to develop nuclear power to advance the development and industrialization of the country.

In February, director of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) Mohamed El Baradei declared that a nuclear plant currently under construction in Iran contained equipment that could be used in the construction of nuclear weapons in violation of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, to which Iran is a signer. Baradei demanded that Tehran be subjected to random, unannounced “inspections” by United Nations snoopers.

Washington then ratcheted up its war rhetoric when U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell asserted March 13 that Iran had a “far more robust nuclear weapons development program than anyone said it had.”

The Iranian government has refused to agree to UN inspections, pointing to the fact that

the IAEA has never fulfilled its end of the nonproliferation agreement by providing technical assistance to Iran’s nuclear power projects.

Iranian people oppose invasion of Iraq

On March 21, a missile fired by British troops attempting to occupy the Iraqi city of Basra crashed into a building owned by

the Iranian oil ministry in Abadan, just 30 miles east of Basra, injuring three people. Abadan was one of the cities that suffered during Baghdad’s invasion in the 1980s. Many in the area, however, are increasingly opposed to the U.S.-led invasion.

“I personally know many who would go to fight for Iraq; we’re just waiting for the call to jihad, and for Iran to open the border,” said Qassem Khatamian, an Abadan shopkeeper. “We don’t want to fight for Saddam, but for our people, our oil, and our land. It has nothing to do with him.”

In the first major protest against the invasion of Iraq, hundreds of thousands filled the streets of Tehran March 28, following Friday prayers. A group of demonstrators marched to the British embassy and threw stones at its windows shouting, “The British embassy must be closed!” Washington has not had an embassy in Iran since it severed diplomatic relations with Tehran following the revolutionary upsurge that drove the U.S.-imposed monarchy from power in 1979.

At the same time, 15,000 people marched in Cairo, Egypt, against the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. The largest protests by Palestinians in support of Iraq took place in the occupied territories as tens of thousands rallied in Gaza and across the West Bank. On the other side of the Jordan river, rolling demonstrations took place in Amman and throughout the country.

These actions are also taking more and more of a protest character against the local regimes in a number of majority Arab countries, where the governments have gone along with Washington’s onslaught to one degree or another.

The Jordanian government, for example, reported that 55 demonstrations in defense of Iraq took place the March 22–23 weekend in the kingdom, including sharp clashes with the police in the city of Maan, and in the Palestinian Al-Wihdat refugee camp. A representative of the monarchy sought to put the best face on the situation, saying the demonstrations showed that Jordan “is a democratic country.”

U.S. troops stage war games in Korea

BY RÓGER CALERO

Combined U.S. and south Korean troops participated in the first of four major military exercises targeting the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) this year. They include mock battles and amphibious landings.

Dubbed Foal Eagle, the military maneuvers in the field involve the simulation of large-scale movement of troops in the Korean Peninsula. Washington and Seoul’s Combined Forces Command, established in 1978, also conducted a computer-based war drill called “Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration.” The exercises include large simulated battles near the so-called Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), along the border dividing the Korean peninsula.

U.S. imperialism imposed the division of the country, with Moscow’s complicity, at the end of the 1950–53 Korean War. Washington has maintained it with tens of thousands of troops ever since, despite overwhelming sentiment for reunification among Koreans on both sides.

The simulated engagement is described by the military think tank GlobalSecurity.org as occurring at the stage when “a war with north Korea is imminent, but actual fighting has not yet begun.” The month-long exercises began March 7.

On March 21, U.S. Marines and south Korean soldiers staged an amphibious landing maneuver in Pohang, in the south, supported by jet fighters from the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson*. The carrier was deployed last February to the area as part of Washington’s latest escalation against the DPRK. U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld also ordered the U.S. Air Force to send long-range bombers to the area.

The list of fighter planes being used in the exercises includes the A-10 Thunderbolt, F-15E Strike Eagle, and F-16C Fighting Falcon, as well as the F-117 Nighthawk. U.S. military commanders said that the last time the F-117 was seen in the Korean Peninsula was some ten years ago.

The DPRK government denounced the

military exercises as an “intolerable provocation,” which threatened rapprochement efforts.

“A dangerous military aim is sought in staging such maneuvers in the area very close to the military demarcation line,” said the north Korean paper *Rodong Sinmun*.

“We cannot but take seriously the large-scale frantic test nuclear war [as] a preliminary war against the DPRK staged by the U.S. on the sidelines of the Iraqi war,” said the daily Korean newspaper. “It is becoming certain that in case the U.S. imperialists’ invasion of Iraq is ‘successful,’ they will wage a new war of aggression on the Korean peninsula...to invade the DPRK after occupying Iraq.”

U.S. commanding officers in south Korea claimed that the exercises were not intended to “inflamm” north Korea, and that the maneuvers were not offensive.

“We are not changing anything about this exercise because of tensions on the peninsula,” Brig. Gen. James Coggin told the *Washington Post* March 24. “It takes place every year and was planned long ago. It is normal, routine.”

He added, however, that the recent escalation of tension between the two countries is a reason for combat readiness. “It does reiterate that the call could come,” Coggin said. “We are ready to fight tonight if we have to.”

Tensions escalated earlier this year when U.S. government officials accused the DPRK of planing to use its nuclear power plant to produce weapons-grade plutonium for manufacturing a nuclear bomb, after the north Korean government withdrew from the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and kicked out inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Washington ordered two dozen B-52 and B-1 bombers to Guam, in order to give it the military option to strike the north’s nuclear plant at Yongbyon. It also stepped up aerial and naval spying of the DPRK. On March 2, four north Korean MiG fighter jets trailed a U.S. RC-135 spy plane for 20 minutes over the Sea of Japan. The incident was the closest

such encounter between the two governments in 35 years.

Washington’s accusations against the DPRK as a “nuclear threat” notwithstanding, the latest escalation is a continuation of five decades of military and economic aggression against the north Korean workers state by U.S. imperialism. Washington has sought to smear Pyongyang as a “terrorist regime,” depicting the north as a potential aggressor against neighboring countries and the United States.

Since the stalemate at the end of the Korean war, Washington has kept 37,000 troops stationed there. It also maintains another 48,000 troops in Japan, as well as the nuclear-armed U.S. Seventh Fleet patrolling the area.

According to a March 22 Korea Central NewsAgency (KCNA) dispatch, Washington asked Tokyo to allow its warning and control plane e-767 to fly above waters of the Korean Peninsula under the pretext of “ensuring security” for U.S. electronic reconnaissance planes overflying the DPRK.

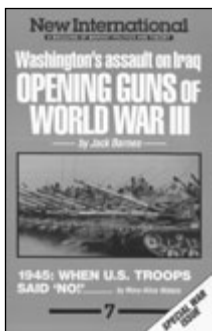
The March 28 *New York Times* reported that the Japanese government is considering adding Tomahawk and Patriot PAC-2 missiles to its current arsenal of short-range Patriot rockets. With a 650-mile range, the Patriot PAC-2 could hit targets in north Korea.

Seeking to lessen its dependency on the U.S. government for intelligence gathering, Tokyo put into orbit the first two of its own eight military spy satellites March 28. The satellites, which carry radar equipment and cameras, will allow Japan to monitor north Korea, reported the *Times*.

The DPRK, which recently test-fired two short-range missiles, had warned that Tokyo’s launching of satellites could prompt it to drop a five-year-old, self-imposed moratorium on long-range missile testing.

The north Korean government has reiterated its right to self-defense by any means necessary. “There is no law allowing Japan to launch a satellite into space,” a DPRK foreign ministry official told KCNA, while banning north Korea from doing so.

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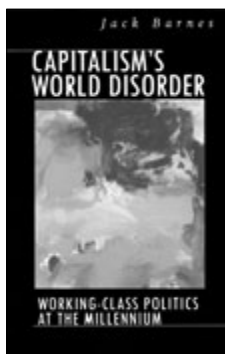
Opening Guns of World War III
Washington's Assault on Iraq
in New International no. 7

By Jack Barnes

The feature article in this issue of *New International* explains that the devastation of Iraq in the Gulf War did not lead to the dawn of a new world order. The war held a mirror to the declining capitalist world order and accelerated its contradictions. It sounded the opening guns of sharpening conflicts and class battles that will decide whether the horrors of World War III are inflicted on humanity or a road is opened by working people to a socialist future of international human solidarity. Also available in Spanish, French, and Swedish. **\$12.00**
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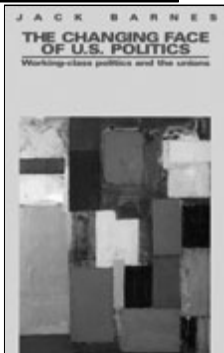
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Students protest California school budget cuts

BY BILL KALMAN

SACRAMENTO, California—Some 10,000 students from community colleges and other schools throughout California jammed the lawn of the state capitol here March 17 to protest Democratic governor Gray Davis's plan to slash education programs because of a "budget deficit." The students were joined by teachers organized by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), school workers organized by the Service Employee International Union (SEIU), and school administrators. Over 30 buses came from City College of San Francisco alone. Two hundred students and teachers traveled overnight by bus from Compton Community College in Los Angeles, and campuses from the San Joaquin Valley were represented as well.

Though school administrators asked that rally participants focus on the budget cuts, many also carried "No War On Iraq" signs. One banner from Chabot College read, "Stop wars on Iraq, on education."

In January Davis announced that the California budget had a \$34.6 billion "shortfall" and proposed cuts in state programs of over \$20 billion for the 2003–2004 budget.

Davis's proposed budget includes an almost 10 percent decrease, \$700 million, in the spending levels for California's 108 community colleges, while increasing student fees from \$11 per unit to \$24 per unit. According to one report, "The Budget estimates that the state will save an additional \$215 million because of short-term attrition," in other words, students who are forced to drop out of school.

There are about 2.9 million community college students in California. According to the Community College League of California, more than 200,000 students would be forced out of school by the cuts.

"My dad is a farm worker, and I'm the



About 400 students walked out of class at Oakland Technical High School March 17 to protest more than 1,000 layoff "warnings" sent out by the school district.

first child in our family to go to college," said Mariela Navarro. "I can't afford college if these cuts are made—that's why I came to participate."

"It is unfair what they are trying to do to community colleges," said Shanite Young, a student at Compton Community College. "There are a lot of working mothers at community colleges. Take the money from the prison system, not schools," she said.

Young was referring to Davis's plan to budget funds for a new maximum-security prison in Delano, and remodeling San Quentin's death row. Spending for the Department of Corrections is slated to increase by \$40.2 million next year. The proposed budget aims to force a \$854 million reduction in most state employees' wages. Prison guards and other Department of Corrections employees would receive wage

increases of \$2.4 million this year, and \$6.7 million next year.

In order to skirt Proposition 98, passed in 1988, which requires 50 cents of every dollar of additional revenue collected in the state to go toward education, Davis has proposed shifting a number of programs to county control, like nursing-home care, child care, and mental health programs. High school districts around the state have already sent out layoff notices to teachers and staff. The San Francisco Unified School District sent out 700 layoff notices, and eliminated summer school music, art, and theater programs for elementary school students. The district is expecting between \$21 million and \$25 million in state budget cuts for next year.

On March 12 hundreds of high school students walked out of San Leandro High

School in the East Bay and rallied at City Hall against the school district's layoff notices to 119 employees, mainly teachers and counselors. Many students had notes from their parents asking that they be excused from classes.

In southern California, preliminary termination notices were sent to almost a quarter of Burbank's teachers. Students and parents organized a protest of the teacher layoffs on March 14.

All full-time employees at Compton Community College received notices of possible layoffs on March 12. Sixty members of the faculty union protested at a Board of Trustees meeting.

In addition to the attacks on education, Davis is proposing to: increase the state's sales and cigarette taxes; reduce cash assistance payments, employment services, and child care programs that are part of CalWORKS (state welfare program); cut the state supplemental social security payments by over 6 percent; reduce or eliminate Medi-Cal health benefits for low income families; and defer payments into the state's pension plan for state workers.

Payment of \$30 billion in interest and principal on state bonds held by the wealthy would be left untouched.

On March 11 the state assembly approved \$3.3 billion in spending cuts. One bill, sponsored by San Francisco Democrat Mark Leno, would authorize cities and counties to levy income taxes on top of the federal and state income tax.

While California's budget deficit of \$34.6 billion is a record, New York State is projecting a whopping \$11.5 billion deficit, while Texas is not far behind with \$9.9 billion—what Bloomberg News calls the "biggest U.S. state budget shortfalls since World War II." California has the world's fifth largest economy.

‘Militant’ launches subscription drive

Continued from front page
place an eight-week effort to win new subscribers to the *Militant* and its sister publication in Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial*, at the center of their campaign against imperialism and its wars, on the job and among other fellow unionists, many of whom are resisting takeback demands by the employers. Branches of the Socialist Workers Party, the Young Socialists, and Communist Leagues in other countries are making similar decisions.

The subscription drive begins April 5 and will continue through June 1. Partisans of the socialist publications around the world are in the process of adopting goals towards winning more than 1,000 new readers. The targets of the international campaign will be announced next week.

A book-sales campaign will accompany the subscription effort. It includes selling hundreds of copies of issues nos. 7, 10, and 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International* and the book *Capitalism's World*



Militant/Carole Lesnick
Young Socialist sells the *Militant* outside coal mine in New Mexico.

Disorder during this eight-week period. These books describe the dynamics of the sharpening conflict between the U.S. rulers and their imperialist rivals and capitalism's march toward fascism and world war. They provide a basis for understanding the fraud of "bankruptcies" that large corporations, such as United and American Airlines, are using to press their attacks on wages and benefits, and the onset of a prolonged economic depression. They explain why resistance to the employers' assaults on the working class and the unions is at the center of the fight against imperialism and its wars. These Pathfinder titles will be available on special offers when purchased along with a subscription to the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial* (see ad on page 4).

Socialists are already laying the groundwork for this campaign, reaching out to workers, farmers, and youth as Washington's slaughter against the Iraqi people unfolds.

Hitting the ground running

At Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin, for example, several hundred members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 538 have been on strike since February 28. Socialist workers and Young Socialists from throughout the Midwest have taken part in this fight to offer their solidarity, find out the facts, and spread the word to others. In the process, they have also sold dozens of copies of the *Militant*. Several strikers have already signed up for subscriptions to the paper.

"Many workers have voiced appreciation for the truthful coverage the *Militant* has given their struggle," reported Betsey Stone upon returning from a March 29 rally outside the plant. "Tyson workers have passed the paper from hand to hand, and copies of the articles on the strike are set out on tables at the union hall."

"We have also discussed the war with those we've talked to on the picket line," Stone said. "While a number do not agree with what we have to say, we have found an open response to the discussion."

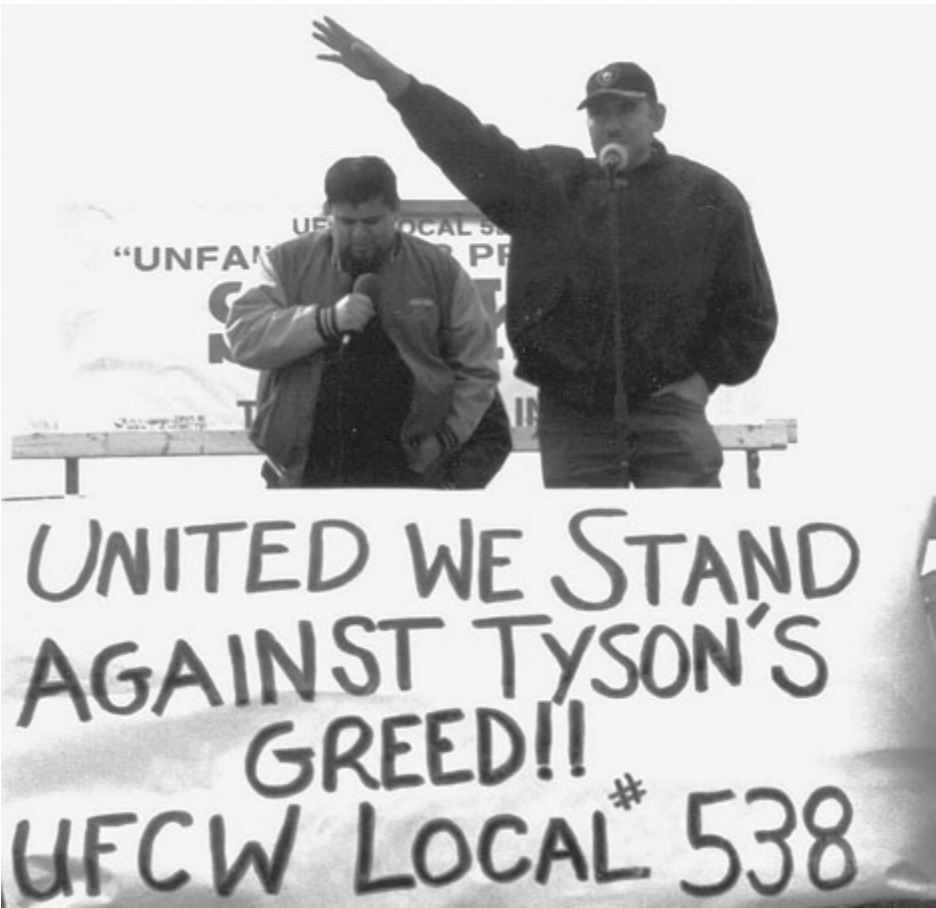
Young Socialist member Nicole Sarmiento reports that supporters of the *Militant* attended a March 20 lunch-break rally by union garment workers at Point Blank Body Armor in Oakland Park, Florida.

"Students and other workers who had recently heard about the struggle at Point Blank joined the picket line," Sarmiento said. The rally was held to protest the firing of another pro-union worker (see photo box on page 9). "*Militant* supporters have reached out to these unionists," she added, "reporting on their fight and introducing them to the paper." Several unionists inside this plant have already subscribed to the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial*, Sarmiento said.

Stepped up sales on the job

Inside garment and textile plants, packinghouses, and coal mines, as well as at factory gates and portals, socialists have stepped up sales of single copies of the socialist publications in preparation for winning long-term readers. The *Militant* urges all its readers to send regular progress reports on these and similar efforts by Monday morning each week.

Coal miners snapped up 13 copies of the



Militant/Betsey Stone
Workers in the forefront of resistance to takebacks by the bosses—like those shown above at March 29 solidarity rally for meat packers striking Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin—appreciate the truthful coverage the *Militant* gives to their struggle.

Militant from two supporters of the socialist press who brought bundles of the socialist publications to miners as they arrived for work March 15 at the McKinley mine located on the Navajo Nation near Gallup, New Mexico. They plan to maintain steady sales like these outside mines and factories in the region throughout the campaign, both to yield new subscriptions and reinforce the efforts of socialist workers inside.

Outside the workplace, in the streets of working-class neighborhoods and shopping districts, socialists are taking advantage of the longer days and warmer weather to set up literature and campaigning tables after work and on the weekends, and draw in passersby with soapbox speeches.

At the peace rallies and other protest actions against the U.S.-led war on Iraq, sales of the socialist press have been brisk. During the March 22 peace march in New York, for example, participants bought 650 copies of the *Militant*, a dozen subscriptions, and \$700 in Pathfinder books.

Socialists are also finding fertile ground for revolutionary propaganda in other social protest actions.

During the April 1 march to defend affirmative action in Washington, D.C., for example, socialists sold nearly 100 copies of the *Militant* and

\$160 in Pathfinder books. In Pittsburgh three Black men have died at the hands of the police since September. *Militant* supporters have played an active role in building several demonstrations against these police killings, writing articles about the fight to bring the cops responsible to justice, and winning new readers to the socialist press in the process. "A coalition called People Against Police Violence has been formed in response to these police killings," said Marty Ressler, a socialist worker in Pittsburgh active in this group. "We've worked with the families of those who've been killed to organize several demonstrations in the last few months" (see article on back page). Many participants in these actions have already bought single copies of the *Militant*, Ressler said, laying the groundwork for winning new long-term readers.

Contributions needed for Militant Fund

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The first week of the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* fund appeal showed the potential for a successful international effort, as local goals pushed the target up to \$85,000 from the projected figure of \$75,000. The immediate challenge facing the fund organizers now is to get the collection of pledges rolling, as well as to reach out broadly for contributions. A third of the way into the nine-week drive, only \$6,200 has been collected—about 8 percent of the international goal. The campaign runs from March 10 to May 12.

The raised goal reflects the value placed in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* by their readers and supporters. The socialist periodicals are political weapons for working people and youth opposing imperialism's course toward a deepening economic depression and war at home and abroad.

This week's issue, for example, brings facts and explanations about the U.S.-led assault on Iraq as it campaigns to "bring the troops home now!" It carries a picket-line report from the strike by meatpacking workers at Tyson Foods in Wisconsin, and a firsthand account of the Washington protest in defense of affirmative action.

Other articles on Korea, Iran, education protests, and union struggles arm readers with the facts about important events in the class struggle.

The fund appeal payments are needed for the *Militant* to provide this kind of news and analysis each week. They cover daily and weekly production expenses, from the rent due at the new offices, to payments to the printing, shipping, and utilities companies used by the paper. Many of these bills need to be paid now.

In addition, the contributions make it possible to field reporting teams around the country and internationally. This week, for example, *Militant* staff member Sam Manuel was on the spot to report and photograph the April 1 affirmative action demonstration.

Fundraising events are planned for the next couple of weeks in many cities, giving local campaigners a focus for their efforts. Fund supporters are calling and sending out mailings to those who have made pledges, encouraging them to bring their checkbooks to the event or to mail in their contributions.

In Newark the local fund committee invited Ma'mud Shirvani, Pathfinder's Farsi-language editor, to speak March 29 on the theme, "From Iran to Iraq: the Legacy of the Iranian Revolution Today." Among those present was a student from nearby Essex Community College who had run into the *Militant* at the October 26 peace rally in Washington, D.C. He stayed after the meeting to talk to Shirvani and others. In the course of the discussion, he decided to return soon to buy some books.

Sarah Katz, the Newark fund director, told the *Militant* that the fund had received a big boost from the meeting. Around \$500 was contributed that night, while new pledges brought the total to date to \$2,200. Supporters have been encouraged in their efforts to make their goal of \$3,800, and to step up the pace of collection.

Shirvani will be in New York April 4 and in Seattle April 19 to speak at fund events.

Street campaigning and soapboxing with the socialist periodicals and Pathfinder books have also brought in contributions to the fund. Members of two sales teams in New York raised \$18 in contributions from passersby on Saturday March 29 by including appeals for contributions in their soapbox speeches. As the *Militant* subscription campaign begins, supporters of the socialist press in the city plan to build on this successful initiative.

Local areas are encouraged to send in reports on their efforts to the *Militant*.

| \$85,000 Militant Fund March 10–May 12: Week 3 | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|------------|
| | Goal | Paid | % |
| Twin Cities MN | 3,000 | 750 | 25% |
| New York NY | 7,500 | 1,866 | 25% |
| Los Angeles CA | 7,500 | 1,350 | 18% |
| Philadelphia PA | 3,000 | 500 | 17% |
| Boston MA | 2,800 | 320 | 11% |
| Charlotte NC | 3,000 | 290 | 10% |
| Des Moines IA | 900 | 50 | 6% |
| San Francisco CA | 7,000 | 300 | 4% |
| Detroit MI | 3,000 | 100 | 3% |
| Washington DC | 2,200 | 70 | 3% |
| Miami FL | 1,600 | 50 | 3% |
| Houston TX | 3,200 | 95 | 3% |
| Omaha NE | 900 | 10 | 1% |
| Cleveland OH | 1,100 | 5 | 0% |
| Atlanta GA | 4,100 | 0 | 0% |
| Birmingham AL | 2,500 | 0 | 0% |
| Chicago IL | 4,200 | 0 | 0% |
| Newark NJ | 3,800 | 0 | 0% |
| Northeast PA | 1,600 | 0 | 0% |
| Pittsburgh PA | 3,000 | 0 | 0% |
| Seattle WA | 6,000 | 0 | 0% |
| Tampa FL | 1,800 | 0 | 0% |
| Utah | 800 | 0 | 0% |
| Western CO | 2,500 | 0 | 0% |
| Other | | 306 | |
| U.S. Total | 77,000 | 6,062 | 8% |
| Iceland | 150 | 50 | 33% |
| United Kingdom | 500 | 10 | 2% |
| Australia | 1,000 | 0 | 0% |
| Canada | 3,460 | 0 | 0% |
| France | 300 | 0 | 0% |
| New Zealand | 1,500 | 0 | 0% |
| Sweden | 400 | 0 | 0% |
| International total | 84,310 | 6,122 | 7% |
| Int'l goal/Should be | 85,000 | 28,050 | 33% |

Kurdish struggle for self-determination has long history

(First of two articles)

BY SAM MANUEL

More than 1,000 U.S. soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade parachuted into northern Iraq March 26 to start a northern front in the U.S.-led war. The invasion is aimed at overthrowing the regime of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, taking over the country and its resources, and dealing a blow to Washington’s imperialist rivals—especially Paris and Berlin. The area where the U.S. paratroopers landed is under Kurdish control.

As part of its efforts to masquerade “Operation Iraqi Freedom” as a war of liberation for the country’s inhabitants, Washington has attempted to portray its actions as helping the Kurdish people shake off the yoke of national oppression. Nothing could be further from the truth. The U.S. rulers have no interest in the national rights of the Kurds, as the conduct of their military forces clearly showed in 1990–91. For decades they have collaborated with the historic butchers of the Kurds in the region.

During the 1990–91 Arab-Persian Gulf War and in its aftermath the Kurdish people came to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national self-determination. Prior to the Gulf War, the Kurdish struggle had largely been in retreat, having been dealt repeated defeats over the previous half-century by the Iraqi, Turkish, Iranian, and Syrian ruling classes, with the complicity of Washington, London, Paris, and Moscow. A look at that history helps shed light on imperialism’s predatory aims today.

The fight of the Kurds for national rights has been a historic problem for the Turkish rulers—who once sat atop the vast Ottoman empire—and for the main imperialist powers that established domination of the area in the first world war.

An estimated 25 million Kurds live in a territory spanning the intersection of the borders of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Armenia, and Syria. More than half, or up to 15 million, live in southeastern Turkey. Roughly five to seven million live in Iran, about four million in northern Iraq, and one-and-a-half million in Syria.

Struggle against national oppression

The Kurds have a long history of struggle against subjugation, first against Arab conquerors in the 7th century, then Seljuk Turks in the 11th, Mongolian rulers from the 13th to the 15th century, followed by the fight against Ottoman rule.

Under the Ottoman empire the Kurds lived in the Mesopotamian plains and highlands of Turkey and Iran. They faced ferocious oppression at the hands of impe-

rial officials and troops. Between the 16th and 18th centuries vast areas of Kurdistan were devastated.

The Ottoman rulers allied their empire to the German rulers in World War I. London and Paris, the dominant imperialist powers in the Mideast, carved up the region between themselves. The Treaty of Sèvres, named after the French city where the new imperial lords imposed their dictates on Ankara, forced the Ottomans to cede Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) and Palestine, including Trans-Jordan, to the British; and Syria, including Lebanon, to the French. From that conference to today the imperialist powers dominating the Mideast and the succeeding bourgeois regimes in the region would use the Kurds and their struggle for independence as pawns in the twists and turns of their class interests.

London, for example, backed a provision in the Sèvres treaty that supported the formation of an autonomous Kurdish state, which would include the oil-rich province of Mosul. In the wake of the overthrow of the Ottoman monarchy, however, the Turkish rulers demanded a new accord that made no reference to Kurdish independence. In 1923, London reached an agreement with the British-imposed monarchy in Baghdad to include Mosul as part of Iraq. The Kurds were given a “promise” that they would hold high government positions and their language would be preserved in Kurdish areas.

The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad

Kurdish rebellions in Turkey and Iran in the 1920s to secure their independence were brutally suppressed. During a revolt in Turkey in 1937–38, Ankara used aerial bombardment, poison gas, and artillery shelling against Kurdish strongholds.

During World War II, Iran was partially occupied by foreign troops. British forces took over the south, while Soviet troops moved into the north. The region around Mahabad was not occupied.

The interimperialist conflict at the center of World War II gave rise to many anti-colonial struggles. In 1942, the pro-independence movement Komala Jiani Kurdistan was founded in Iran. Three years later, some of the same forces launched the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) of Iran, which all Komala members joined. The KDP demanded autonomy, not an independent state, including recognition of the Kurdish language, locally elected government authorities, and legislation that would give some protection to peasants from landlord exploitation. In January 1946, the KDP proclaimed the first Kurdish indepen-



Kurdish national liberation fighters, above, in northern Iraq, 1991. Kurds throughout the region rose up after the Arab-Persian Gulf War to assert their national rights. The rebellions were crushed ruthlessly by Iraqi troops with Washington’s complicity. The imperialist powers invading Iraq today have long history of collaborating with the historic local butchers of this oppressed people throughout Kurdistan, shown in shaded area of the adjacent map.



dent republic in that northern area. The Mahabad republic, as it was known, established diplomatic relations with the workers and peasants government that had come to power in neighboring Azerbaijan. It introduced Kurdish as the official language in schools, and Kurdish-language publications flourished.

The Kurdish republic lasted for nearly a year. When the Iranian monarchy deployed forces to squash the two governments and reoccupy the areas in December 1946, Moscow opposed the resistance efforts by the Azerbaijani and Kurdish peoples. This led to a split in the Azerbaijani leadership, with the majority following Soviet premier Joseph Stalin’s dictate and calling off armed resistance. The Stalinist leadership in Azerbaijan capitulated without a struggle. The fall of the Azerbaijani government quickly led to the fall of the Kurdish republic. Kurdish forces, however, organized a fighting retreat.

The retreat was organized by Mustapha Barzani, the military commander of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, who had earlier led Kurds from Iraq to join the republic in northern Iran led by Ghazi Muhammad. Fighting the Shah’s army, they crossed into Iraq where they came under heavy assault by troops of the Iraqi monarchy backed by British imperialism. Barzani then led his forces in a fighting retreat through Turkey and Iran into the Soviet Union. They remained there until the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in the July 1958 revolution, when they returned to Iraqi Kurdistan to continue the struggle for self-determination.

Although the first-ever independent Kurdish republic was crushed by the Iranian monarchy, the Kurds continued their struggle during the decades that followed. Washington, which replaced London as the world’s top imperialist power during World War II, has alternately doled out aid with an eyedropper to Kurdish nationalist groups, and then abruptly cut off this backing, depending on its shifting relations with regimes in the area, especially Baghdad and Tehran.

Following a wave of protests and strikes that broke out at the beginning of the 1950s, a group of Iraqi military officers influenced by the perspective of pan-Arab unity overthrew the monarchy on July 14, 1958. They received widespread support from the population. Kurds participated fully in the revolt with the expectation that the new government would back their demand for self-determination.

By the autumn of 1961, Kurds in Iraq were in full revolt when it became apparent that the new government had no intention of meeting Kurdish demands. The

monarchy in Iran backed the fight of Iraqi Kurds in exchange for the Kurdish groups using their influence to quell Kurdish aspirations for sovereignty in Iran. Baghdad countered this ploy with a March 1970 decree that granted limited autonomy to the Kurds, recognition of the Kurdish language, appointment of a Kurdish vice-president, and representation of Kurds in the government proportionate to their numbers in the population.

A semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq was the last thing the Shah of Iran wanted to appear on his border, setting a “dangerous example” for the millions of Kurds living within Iran. In 1975 Tehran brokered a deal with Baghdad to subordinate their disputes to the need to put an end to Kurdish demands for self-determination on both sides of the border.

Both the monarchies and successive bourgeois regimes in Iraq and Iran, right up to today, have tried to divide the Kurds in this way to advance the interests of the ruling regimes in Baghdad or Tehran.

Aftermath of Arab-Persian Gulf War

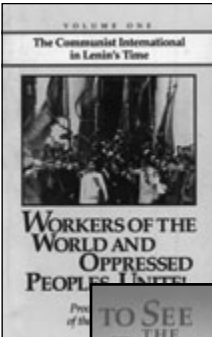
In the aftermath of the Arab-Persian Gulf War, the Kurdish people took advantage of the weakening of the Saddam Hussein regime to press their struggle forward. They held many villages and towns, including the major city of Kirkuk, for a week or more in March 1991. Baghdad used helicopter gunships and heavy armor to crush the Kurdish rebellion with ruthless brutality, causing two million or more Kurdish refugees to attempt to cross the Turkish and Iranian borders.

U.S. and European imperialist powers declared a temporary “enclave” for the Kurdish refugees north of the 36th parallel in northern Iraq near the Turkish border in 1991. Washington sent Special Forces units into the area, functioning as little more than a police force for Saddam Hussein at the time. Along with Turkish soldiers, the U.S. troops forced refugees out of Turkey and off nearby mountains into ill-provisioned and barren transit camps. Washington’s aim was to push the Kurds back to the towns and villages from which they had fled.

At that time, Ankara had joined Washington in the war against Iraq in hopes of winning trade favors and military aid and hardware. Now, after the Turkish parliament turned down the U.S. rulers’ request to allow tens of thousands of ground troops to be deployed on Turkish soil and use Turkey as a base to launch a northern invasion of Iraq, the tune of the White House has changed. This zig-zag in the relationship with Ankara—not concern for the trampling of Kurdish national rights in the area—is the reason behind U.S. president George Bush’s recent warnings that the Turkish government, a fellow NATO member, dare not send its army into Iraq.

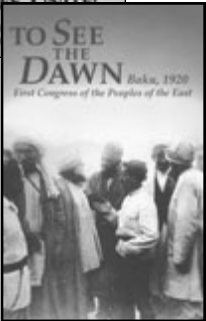
The next installment will focus on the Kurdish struggle in Turkey and Syria.

Further reading from Pathfinder



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U.S.-led slaughter

Continued from front page
suppress resistance by Iraqi paramilitary forces.

After a rapid advance toward Baghdad in the first six days of the war, U.S. and British forces slowed down the pace for several days in order to reinforce stretched supply lines. Washington is now deploying an additional 100,000 soldiers to join the 300,000 imperialist troops already in the Arab-Persian Gulf region. On March 26, the U.S. air force dropped 1,000 paratroopers into Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq to launch a second front against Baghdad—trying to make up for Ankara’s refusal to allow U.S. ground forces to invade Iraq from Turkish soil.

The unfolding of the war has intensified the debate over military strategy in U.S. ruling-class circles, between those whose main spokesperson is Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and those who defend the “Powell doctrine.” Rumsfeld argues for waging war with a smaller, more agile force, relying heavily on high-tech “precision” bombs, and is willing to take greater risks in the field. Secretary of State Colin Powell defends the strategy Washington used in the 1990-91 Gulf War—launching a ground war only with overwhelming force after prolonged and sweeping air strikes.

At the same time, the conflict between Washington, London, Paris, Berlin, and other imperialist powers over who will control Iraq and its oil wealth—as well as the broader region—has sharpened through the dispute over the future “reconstruction” of occupied Iraq.

Bombings outrage Iraqi workers

The U.S. and British armed forces launched a full-scale assault on Iraq March 20 with a massive bombing of several Iraqi cities and a ground invasion from Kuwait. Some 100,000 troops—about a third of the imperialist force—have now entered Iraq.

The initial “surgical strikes” aimed at the top Iraqi leadership were turned into a broader bombing campaign, as cruise missiles and bombs rained down on Baghdad, Basra, Nasiriyah, Najaf, and other cities.

As the imperialist troops pressed toward the outskirts of Baghdad, the bombing of the capital has sharply escalated and so has the civilian toll. Pentagon officials reported that as of March 31—eleven days into the war—U.S. and British warplanes had dropped 8,000 “precision-guided” bombs, and 700 Tomahawk cruise missiles had been launched from planes, ships and submarines. In comparison, during the entire 40-day Gulf war in 1990-1991, the U.S. Navy launched a total of 288 cruise missiles and fighter planes dropped 88,500 tons of bombs.

Iraq’s health minister, Umid Medhat Mubarak, reported that an estimated 350 people had been killed and 3,650 wounded in the first week of the war, the majority of whom were women and children. He said the imperialist forces had been using cluster bombs against civilians in Baghdad and Basra.

On March 26, two missiles hit a crowded working-class neighborhood in Baghdad, killing 17 people and wounding 45 others, according to hospital officials. The bombing, which reduced a block of auto repair shops to rubble, also knocked down power lines and ruptured water pipes in the Al-Shaab neighborhood. Apartments were damaged by flying shrapnel. “This is barbarian,” shouted Adnan Saleh Barseem, one of the hundreds of angry residents who came onto the streets to voice their anger. Virtually everyone in the neighborhood who was interviewed by U.S. reporters blamed Washington and London for the carnage.

“We are innocent people, and we want to know, ‘What is it that Bush wants?’” said Hisham Madloul, 28, a janitor quoted by the *New York Times*, who said two of his



British soldier, above, takes aim at resident of the UmmQasr seaport, March 29. This city in southern Iraq is now occupied by American and British forces. The invading troops are conducting house-to-house searches in all urban centers and villages they have taken over. At right, U.S. Marine during a search pushes on a gate with his gun barrel to keep his weapon in firing position as he tries to break into a house in Nasiriyah. The gate was locked.



friends were killed. “If he wants Iraq to surrender its sovereignty, he will fail, because Iraq will stay Iraq.”

Two days later, in broad daylight, another missile hit a crowded marketplace in a working-class, largely Shiite neighborhood of northwest Baghdad. Dr. Osama Sakhari told reporters at the Al Noor Hospital that he had counted 55 people killed and 47 wounded in the explosion. Again, residents condemned the U.S. and British military for the slaughter.

U.S. officials brushed off the accusations for both of these deadly attacks, claiming that they could have been caused by the Iraqi government. *New York Times* reporter John Burns did his part, too, commenting that, according to U.S.-backed Iraqi exiles, the government in Baghdad would have reason “to organize incidents like the two bombing attacks this week.”

The stepped-up air raids have been increasingly destructive, with 4,600-pound bombs—the so-called bunker-busters—being dropped in downtown Baghdad. On March 28, huge bombs struck the main telephone exchange, leaving much of the capital without phone service.

While intensifying the bombing of the Iraqi capital, U.S. and British troops have begun to probe attacks on the dug-in Republican Guard units surrounding the city. As the *Militant* goes to press, they have fought their way into Hindiya, a city of 80,000 about 50 miles south of Baghdad, and are stepping up their march on other nearby towns. Seeking to prepare public opinion for the kind of wars the U.S. rulers expect to fight in Iraq and elsewhere, a senior officer at Central Command at Qatar stated that Washington was prepared to pay “a very high price” in casualties to achieve its goals.

Troops redirected to south

In the first few days of the invasion, troops from the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division and 1st Marine Division, and the British Royal Marines advanced quickly, encountering little resistance. The U.S. forces avoided entering urban centers as they moved toward the Iraqi capital. By the third day the forward units had charged 150 miles into Iraq—about half the distance between Kuwait and Baghdad.

U.S. special forces troops, followed by Marines, began to take control of the 500 oil wells in the south. British and U.S. marines reportedly seized the seaport of Umm Qasr and then began a siege of Basra, the country’s second-largest city. Pentagon officials claimed that Iraqi soldiers were surrendering in droves.

Within a few days, however, the invaders were facing resistance in a number of towns and cities, including some that had previously been reported “secured” by the imperialist forces, such as Umm Qasr. The fighting has been carried out mostly by the

Iraqi government’s paramilitary troops, known as Saddam’s Fedayeen.

After triumphalist talk about taking Basra, for example, British forces have been besieging the city “for days after meeting unexpectedly stiff resistance,” an Associated Press news dispatch reported. Fedayeen forces also put up stiff resistance in Nasiriyah, where more than a dozen U.S. soldiers were killed.

In addition to the fighting organized by the regime’s militias, many U.S. soldiers have been “disturbed at the number of Iraqis who are not welcoming U.S. forces as their liberators, but fighting them as invaders,” wrote New York *Newsday* correspondent Thomas Frank from central Iraq.

“I honestly don’t think the Iraqi public wants us here,” said Chief Warrant Officer Sean McNeal, whose Apache helicopter was nearly hit by rifle fire as he flew over an outpost of a few homes in the desert. U.S. troops had been told by their officers that the war would be over soon and they would be received with open arms by ordinary Iraqis. Some thought most Iraqi soldiers would surrender as they had in the 1990-91 Gulf War, when Baghdad’s troops were occupying Kuwait rather than defending their own land.

“We are invading their country,” said Chief Warrant Officer Glen Woodard. “I’d be by my window with a shotgun, too.”

Near the Kuwaiti border, initial press reports stated that local townspeople had welcomed the U.S. and British troops. But since the seizure of the oil wells there by the invading troops, Iraqis have been “nowhere to be seen in the oilfield, and in nearby towns such as Safwan they remain suspicious of U.S. and British intentions and openly express their opposition to the war,” the London *Financial Times* reported March 28. According to *USA Today*, “British army troops guarding the fields said they are trying to coax thousands of Iraq oil workers back to their jobs.”

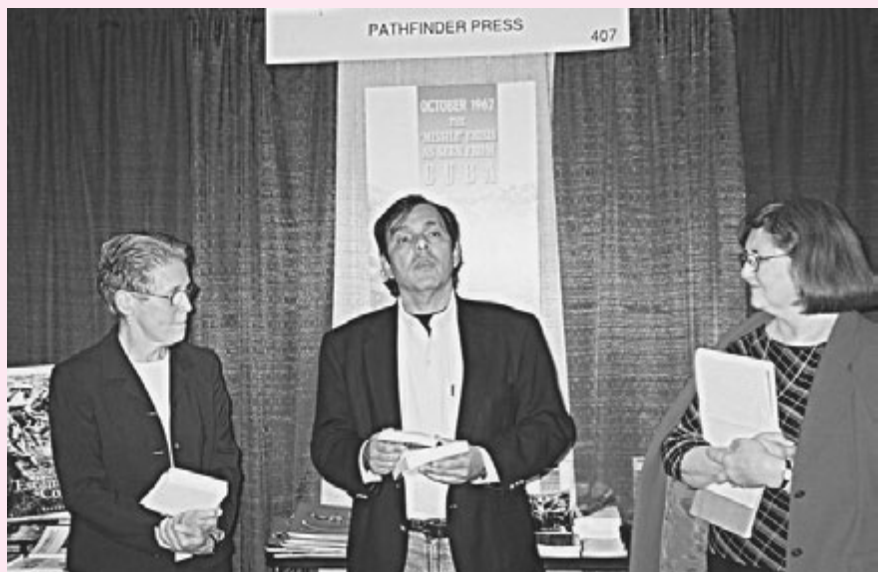
Among the people of Iraq, who in 1958 broke free from British colonial rule and took the country’s oil wealth out of the direct control of British capitalists, there remains widespread identification with the country’s national patrimony.

Early in the invasion, British and U.S. military commanders proclaimed that a “civilian uprising” by Shiite Muslims had begun in Basra. No revolt materialized, however. “Fear Said to Be Keeping Iraqi Dissidents From Rebelling” was the explanation given in a March 26 *New York Times* headline. While intimidation by Iraq’s capitalist government may be a real factor, some big-business commentators have noted that it is not the only one.

In a March 29 editorial, the *Financial Times* complained that “the troubling non-event...is the failure of Iraqis to rise up against Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship and

Continued on Page 11

Book on October 1962 ‘missile’ crisis draws interest at Latin American Studies Association conference



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Presentation of *October 1962: The ‘Missile’ Crisis as Seen from Cuba*, by Tomás Diez, at Pathfinder Press exhibit at Latin American Studies Association (LASA) congress in Dallas, March 17–19. (Left to right) Mary-Alice Waters, President of Pathfinder Press and co-editor of the English-language edition of the book; Jorge Hernández, Director of the University of Havana Center for the Study of the United States and one of the organizers of the October 2002 Havana conference on the 40th anniversary of the “missile” crisis; and Eloise Linger, professor of international relations at State University of New York/Old Westbury, and chair of LASA’s Cuba Section.

Among the nearly 700 panels and related events organized at the congress of academic specialists on Latin America were several discussing the October Crisis. At the workshop on “Putting Cuba Into the Missile Crisis,” Peter Kornbluh of the National Security Archive and the main organizer of the U.S. delegation to the 40th anniversary conference in Havana, also recommended the book by Tomás Diez as “the leading work” on the crisis written from the Cuban perspective.

The international congress, which draws more than 4,000 participants, was somewhat smaller than in previous years due to economic conditions in Latin America, the decision by some delegations not to travel to the United States as an act of protest against Washington’s war on the people of Iraq, and the U.S. government’s denial of visas to a number of prominent delegates, especially from Cuba. Participants purchased over \$800 in Pathfinder books during the event. The best sellers among them were *October 1962: The ‘Missile’ Crisis as Seen from Cuba*, *Marianas in Combat* by Cuban Brig. Gen. Teté Puebla, the story of the Mariana Grajales women’s platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956–58, and the new, expanded edition of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*.

Union official speaks

Continued from front page
trips to Cuba and Mexico. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents seized Calero at Houston Intercontinental Airport, told him he was denied entry to the United States, and imprisoned him at an immigration jail. He was released 10 days later after scores of people poured messages of protest into the INS office in Texas. He now faces exclusion from this country.

Immigration officials began deportation proceedings against Calero based on a 1988 plea-bargain conviction, when he was a high school student in Los Angeles, for selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. The INS waived this conviction twice, when it granted him permanent residency in 1990 and then when it renewed his status a decade later.

Faced with a continuing international protest campaign against its attempts to deport Calero, the Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement (the recently re-organized INS) did not contest Calero's motion to move his hearing from Houston to Newark, New Jersey, where he lives and works. The immigration cops also changed the date of his deportation hearing from March 25 to September 10.

"The work force in many meatpacking plants has changed in its composition from being mostly native born in 1995 to a majority being immigrants a few years later," Pearson said at the March 19 fundraiser. He described his own evolution as a UFCW official trained in business unionism. "I have gone through an evolution as a UFCW representative in those few years," he said, "and have become convinced that a social movement is needed to transform the labor movement and society in general."

Pearson pointed to the role of Calero and other class-conscious workers in taking steps in this direction, as part of a fighting working-class vanguard. "Calero and others like him helped win the union organizing drive" at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, he stated.

Held at the Holy Family school in Des Moines, the fundraising event was sponsored by Iowa supporters of the Róger Calero Defense Committee. It was cosponsored by Jim Oleson, president of UFCW Local 1149 in Perry and Marshalltown, Iowa; the Drake University chapter of the National Lawyers Guild; the Iowa Civil Liberties Union; and two Spanish-language weekly papers, *El Enfoque* and *El Latino*. New endorsers signed up to back the Calero defense campaign at the meeting. Participants contributed \$420 in donations and pledges toward the effort.

"The support for Calero is important because I know a Latina woman who was deported in 48 hours and separated from her family by the Immigration Naturalization Service," said José Ramos, 27, a former meat packer at the IBP plant where Róger Calero worked in Perry, Iowa.

Ramos, now a journalist and editor of *El Latino*, has covered the Calero defense case since he heard Calero speak in Des Moines in late December. He said he "will urge others to write letters of protest to the INS and support Calero's fight not to be deported."

Eugenia Hernández, an attorney for legal services to the immigrant community in Iowa, told participants about the impact of the 1996 immigration laws signed into law by Clinton.

Hernández described the obstacles which immigrants increasingly face, pressures which force workers to use dangerous methods to enter the U.S. One example she cited was the death of 11 immigrants from heat and dehydration after being locked in a railroad grain car in Mexico and found months later in Denison, Iowa, last October.

Ed Leahy, coordinator of the Immigrant Rights Network of Iowa-Nebraska, also spoke on the panel to support Calero's fight against deportation.

BY JACOB PERASSO

OMAHA, Nebraska—"It is going to take a social movement of people not afraid to speak out to move the labor movement forward," Bill Pearson told a meeting of 35 meat packers, young people and immigrant rights advocates here March 20. "Róger's case is part of the fight back."

In introducing Pearson, Donna McDonald, president of the Nebraska

UFCW Local 271, said her local "is strong in support of Róger Calero. These injustices have to stop."

Eleven meat packers participated in the Omaha defense campaign event. Many of them helped to organize various aspects of the meeting, such as the fund collection, and the "activity table" where people wrote letters, signed petitions and got information on the case. A dozen participants wrote letters of protest to the Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement. Several letters drew on personal experience with the brutally unjust immigration policies of the U.S. government. "My father was deported due to a crime he committed in the past," one person wrote. "He had to leave his eight children and his wife. Mr. Calero and many others going through the same situation do not deserve this treatment."

Several young people and others learned about the event at a demonstration against the U.S. war on Iraq that took place the previous weekend. One young packinghouse worker told the meeting that he had been part of a team that won support for the campaign at the antiwar rally. He reported that 70 people had signed the petitions to support Calero at the rally.

Pearson recounted the fight of workers at Dakota Premium Foods, where Calero worked and was part of the struggle for a union contract. It began when two hundred workers in the factory organized a sitdown strike in June 2000 to protest the speed of the production line and the rising injury rate in the plant. The strikers refused to return to work unless the line speed was slowed down and the company agreed to put an end to its practice of forcing meat packers to work their line jobs while injured. Six weeks later the workers won a union election, which management tried unsuccessfully to challenge with the National Labor Relations Board. In the fall of 2002, after two years of determined struggle by the workers, during which the company maintained it would refuse to give in to their demands, Dakota Premium signed a union contract.

Pearson said he agreed immediately upon being asked to write a letter to the Immigration and Naturalization Service demanding Calero be released and charges dropped. He added that he initially hesitated when asked if he would be a co-chair of the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

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Militant/Lisa Rottach

Bill Pearson, president of UFCW Local 789, speaks to more than 30 packinghouse workers and others at March 20 meeting in Omaha to defend Róger Calero.

He said he "was afraid that I would be attached to the Socialist Workers Party." Calero is a long-standing member of the SWP. After thinking about it for a few days, Pearson said, he asked himself, "Am I going to say no to this? When Róger Calero spends his life fighting for justice?"

At a reception held before the meeting several packing house workers from Omaha exchanged experiences with Pearson about common struggles that they are involved in across the Midwest to organize unions and resist the attacks of the meatpacking bosses on line speed, wages, and other working conditions. One worker raised the importance of building solidarity with the 450 members of UFCW Local 538 on strike to push back the concession demands of Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

Alison Brown, a regional attorney with Justice For Our Neighbors, said that she was grateful that Calero has decided to fight back against the injustices being done to immigrants.

Musa Al-Hindi of the Palestine Right to Return Coalition spoke against "Patriot Act II," which is currently being considered by U.S. lawmakers. The new act would give the government the right to strip anyone of U.S. citizenship if convicted of supporting "terrorist" organizations.

"We are gathered here to denounce these practices, this action [against Calero] and this law," said Ed Leahy, coordinator of the Immigrant Rights Network of Iowa-Ne-

braska and an organizer of the event. The program was planned by a committee of supporters of the Róger Calero Defense Committee in Omaha, which includes several area activists and unionists, including a number of packinghouse workers.

At the end of the meeting participants signed a banner to be given to Calero as an expression of support for his fight, demanding "Stop the deportation of Róger Calero!"

Jacob Perasso is a member of UFCW Local 271 at Swift & Co. in Omaha, Nebraska.

For more information or to send a contribution:

Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; phone/fax, (212)563-0585. On the web: **www.calerodefense.org**

Send messages demanding exclusion moves against Calero be dropped to: Demetrios Georgakopolous, Director, Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement. Fax messages to: (973) 645-3074; or mail to: 970 Broad St., Newark, NJ 07102. Copies should be sent to the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

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U.S. peace coalitions support ‘our troops’

BY RÓGER CALERO

With the launching of Washington’s assault on Iraq, most organizers of the recent, large peace marches in the United States have shifted away from organizing mass protests in the streets. They are also emphasizing their patriotic credentials, bringing to the fore the demand to “Support our troops.”

After an initial series of civil disobedience actions organized in the first days of the war, only one coalition—International ANSWER (Act Now to End War and Racism)—has called for nationwide protest actions.

The United for Peace and Justice coalition (UPJ), which organized the February 15 and March 22 protests in New York involving hundreds of thousands of people, has sponsored billboards on which the words “peace is patriotic” are superimposed on a U.S. flag.

The UPJ’s website calls on opponents of the war to wear black and yellow armbands, stating that the black symbolizes “our mourning for the thousands of innocent Iraqi people who will be killed.... While the yellow will symbolize our support for the American troops.”

Yellow ribbons, which have been around since the U.S. army’s war of genocide against Native Americans, are traditionally a symbol of backing U.S. war efforts under the banner of supporting “our troops.”

Many organizations on the left have also joined the patriotic chorus. The Communist Party USA and Committees of Correspondence, a split-off from the CPUSA, which have been part of the leadership of the UPJ coalition, are among them.

An editorial, titled “Peace is patriotic,” in the March 22 *People’s Weekly World*, the CPUSA’s newspaper, repeated long-held positions by the Stalinist organization. “To protest for peace is not to protest against the troops, or for Saddam Hussein,” the editorial stated. It is to “express concern about the lack of diplomacy and to worry about where this war will take our nation and our world.”

What unites those “working for peace,” the *PWW* editors continued, “is their patriotism.”

Committees of Correspondence leader and UPJ co-chair Leslie Cagan told the *New York Times*, “If we are going to be a



Left: Billboard in San Francisco sponsored by United for Peace and Justice. Right: protester with patriotic sign at San Francisco peace rally on March 22.



force that needs to be listened to by our elected officials, by the media, by power, our movement needs to reflect the population.”

The March 29 *Times* article quoting Cagan was headlined, “Antiwar Effort Emphasizes Civility Over Confrontation.” Featured on the front page of the paper’s “Nation at War” section, the article noted that “with the war against Iraq in its second week, the most influential antiwar coalitions have shifted away from large-scale disruptive tactics and stepped up efforts to appeal to mainstream Americans.”

Protest leaders are presenting them-

selves as “the loyal opposition, embracing the troops but condemning the war,” stated the *Times*.

In the first days of the U.S.-led invasion, a spate of civil disobedience actions was staged. Direct Action to Stop the War, the antiwar umbrella coalition in San Francisco, for example, organized thousands to block intersections and thoroughfares. More than 2,300 people were arrested in three days. Such tactics have now largely been put aside in favor of protests outside corporation offices, media conglomerates, and federal institutions that aim “to attract attention but not offend most Americans,”

Tyson strikers rally against takebacks

Continued from front page
lives!”—a favorite slogan of the union.

The strike began February 28 after workers at the plant rejected 10 concession demands by the company. The proposed takebacks, which the strikers call “The Ten Commandments,” would cut a total of

more than 30 percent in wages and benefits, according to the union flyer distributed at the rally. Tyson’s demands include a two-tier pay-scale cutting hourly rates for new hires from \$11.10 to \$9, and freezing pay for others over a four-year period; eliminating pensions for new hires and freezing benefits for the rest; increasing health-care premiums by as much as \$40 a week and eliminating health-care supplements for retirees; cutting sick leave and disability benefits by more than half; reducing vacations; eliminating two paid holidays for new hires; taking away the right to severance pay if the plant closes; and ending the profit-sharing program.

Tyson Foods, the world’s largest processor and marketer of chicken, beef, and pork, reported gross income of more than \$23 billion last year. The company employs 120,000 people in 300 facilities in 29 U.S. states and 22 countries. It acquired the Jefferson factory along with dozens of other meatpacking and processing plants in its late 2001 purchase of meat producer IBP, Inc. Tyson is a Fortune 500 company in business for 68 years. The onset of capitalist depression has affected the company’s profit margins, making investors nervous. Tyson’s stock fell from \$15.71 per share last July to \$7.20 March 18. Management is using this to justify its takeback demands.

The 470 workers at Jefferson are members of UFCW Local 538. Before the strike, they processed pork products, including pepperoni topping for pizza. Workers at this plant have been able to maintain a higher-than-average wage scale in the industry.

“There is a war against workers in the U.S.,” Wisconsin AFL-CIO president David Newby told the rally. “The example of this here is Tyson.”

The union has dispatched “Truth Squads,” groups of strikers usually numbering a dozen, to large meatpacking plants, starting with factories in the Midwest. Mike French, a striker with 28 years at the plant, told *Militant* reporters that the Truth Squads have passed out informational flyers at plant gates, held meetings with the leadership of local unions, and received cash donations for the strike. “We were always well received,” French said. “Sometimes there was disbelief that the concessions the Tyson bosses were demanding were so deep. But the other unionists know what happens here is coming up the road for them.”

according to the *Times*.

Among those opposing civil disobedience actions is the Win Without War coalition.

Since its formation in December, Win Without War has presented itself as a “mainstream, patriotic voice” in distinction to both UPJ and International ANSWER. The group says it has a mailing list of 2 million. Its affiliates include the NAACP, the National Council of Churches, the National Organization for Women, and the Sierra Club. The main demand organizers of Win Without War put forward up until Washington launched its slaughter of the Iraqi people, was to “let the inspections work”—promoting the use of UN weapons “inspectors” to disarm the Iraqi regime.

“Right from the beginning we tried to frame it as a message that would go down well in broader communities than just the antiwar crowd,” said David Cortright, head of the Fourth Freedom Forum, which is part of Win Without War. “The average labor guy out there wants to be seen in that mainstream, patriotic light.”

The ANSWER coalition, which is dominated by the Workers World Party, another Stalinist organization, has called for an April 12 national march on Washington, D.C., under the slogan, “Stop the War in Iraq.” Actions are also planned that day in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Demands by this group have become more vague and targeted at U.S. president George Bush, rather than Washington, as the demand “Bring the troops home now!” does, for example. Other activities promoted on the ANSWER website include a campaign to “Vote No to War” and “Vote to Impeach” Bush, with “articles of impeachment drafted by former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark.”

Point Blank workers rally for contract, protest firing of unionist



Militant/Nicole Sarmiento

Unionists at Point Blank picket outside the plant during lunch break March 20

BY NICOLE SARMIENTO

OAKLAND PARK, Florida—On March 20, dozens of members of the Union of Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), who work at Point Blank Body Armor here, organized a plant-gate picket during their lunch break to protest the firing of Ralph Frederic, a pro-union worker. Point Blank manufactures bullet-proof vests for the military and police.

Frederic worked at the new Point Blank plant in Deerfield Beach, Florida, which the company opened in February after a federal injunction ordered 175 pro-union workers to be rehired at its Oakland Park plant. The workers at the Oakland Park plant went out on strike in August last year in response to the firing of three pro-union workers, and to demand recognition for their union and a contract. The six-month strike ended in a victory, when a judge ordered the company to rehire the fired union militants.

Workers hired to break the strike were transferred to the Deerfield Beach location, which the company intends to operate without a union. Union members report, however, that a number of workers at the new facility have already signed UNITE cards.

At the March 20 rally the Point Blank unionists, who were joined by students and other workers, gathered and chanted, “What do we want: Contract!” and “No contract, no peace!” in English, Spanish, and Creole. “The judge ordered us to be rehired,” said Milagro Santos, who works at the plant, “but we have to continue the struggle.”

Tyson has been trying to keep the plant running by recruiting scabs in Beloit and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. “Last week there were 80 pickets outside the scab recruiting temporary agency, QPS, in Greenfield, Wisconsin,” a striker explained. “Forty of the pickets were strikers and another 40 were unionists from Milwaukee.” None of the workers employed by Tyson before the strike have crossed the picket line.

Strikers say that two buses of scabs enter the plant each day, most of them Spanish-speaking immigrants, but that little meat has been produced so far. The company has distributed flyers in Chicago in English, Spanish, and Chinese in an effort to recruit more workers from the Culinary plant owned by Tyson, which has laid off dozens of employees, to cross the picket line in Jefferson.

Miguel Olvera, a leader of a long and successful fight to get a union and a contract at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, spoke in Spanish at the March 29 rally. He encouraged the strikers to continue to contact other workers in the state. “This is the way you will break down the company,” he said. “There are hundreds of thousands of workers, including Latino workers, in the same situation as yourselves. Stay united and don’t back down.”

UFCW Local 789 president Bill Pearson led the crowd in chanting, *Si, se puede! Si, se puede!* (yes, we can). This is the favorite slogan in Spanish of the workers at Dakota. Pearson presented a check of \$1,000 from Local 789 to the Jefferson strike fund. Rafael Espinosa, a representative of UFCW Local 789, also spoke at the rally.

The extent of support for the strike among working people in the area was evident at the rally, and a striker said that more than \$11,000 was donated that day for the walk-out. The union pantry received food donations earlier in the day and was stocked full.

More information on the strike can be found at www.tysonfamiliesstandup.org, the union strike headquarters’ website.

Chessie Molano contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

online

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Stop U.S.-led assault on Iraq!

Continued from front page

occupied Iraq—who will get the profitable oil and construction contracts. The sharpening dispute reveals the real goals of the U.S.-British war. It is not about “freedom” and “democracy,” as we are told, but about the plunder of the Mideast. It is a deadly competition between rival imperialist powers over who will dominate the oil-rich region and the world’s resources and markets. Its logic is ultimately toward a third world war.

U.S. officials have announced that under an American-run martial law regime they plan to install in Baghdad, they will award all initial construction and oil contracts in that nation to U.S. companies. Even London, Washington’s main ally, is squealing about getting left out of the booty. The French imperialists, who stand to lose the most because of the lucrative trade they have maintained with Iraq over the past decade, are demanding the occupation regime be run under United Nations auspices to keep their foot in the door.

All of this shows that this is an imperialist war, an assault in the interests of the superwealthy rulers of the United States and their counterparts in other countries—and against the interests of working people in the Mideast, the United States, Britain, and the world over. To hide their aims, the U.S. rulers try to make working people identify as “we Americans” and rally behind “our government.” But for workers and farmers, it’s not *our* government. It’s *their* government, which acts on behalf of the bosses who today are waging a war at home on the rights and living standards of working people.

The pro-war, patriotic campaign to “support our troops” is likewise designed to draw working people behind our exploiters. The U.S. military is an institution that serves their interests, not ours. The soldiers themselves, who in their big majority are fellow workers and farmers in uniform, are used as cannon fodder for the billionaire rulers. For that reason, workers and youth opposed to the U.S.-led war in the Mideast should demand “Bring the troops home now!” *The* troops, not “our” troops. Class-conscious workers should also refuse to wear the yellow ribbons that are part of the pro-war propaganda campaign.

The current debate in the U.S. ruling class over military strategy sheds some light on what imperialism has in store for humanity. The debate is driven by the need of the U.S. rulers to go to war to protect their class interests, not only—or primarily—in Iraq but around the world. Capitalism has entered a prolonged depression. Each of the competing ruling classes is trying to put their armed forces in fighting trim to be in a better position to redivide the world in its favor. The American imperial-

ists, number one among the world’s “civilized” hyenas, have the most at stake.

On one side of this debate are many former U.S. military commanders whose outlook is to a large extent marked by Washington’s defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese people in the 1970s and by the resulting distrust among working people for the government’s direction of foreign and military policy, and refusal to subordinate our struggles to calls for “national unity.” These advocates of the “Powell Doctrine” argue that Washington should launch a war only if it deploys overwhelming military force in order to minimize the political price of U.S. casualties and the risks of a protracted conflict. In the Gulf War and the 1999 attack on Yugoslavia, for example, Washington relied on massive aerial bombing campaigns for weeks or months to limit or avoid the need for a ground assault.

Those who subscribe to the “Rumsfeld doctrine,” on the other hand, argue for waging war with a smaller, more agile force, relying heavily on Special Forces and being willing to take greater risks in the field. In a set of “guidelines” drafted in 2001, Donald Rumsfeld wrote that Washington must avoid “promising not to do things (i.e., not to use ground forces, not to bomb below 20,000 feet, not to risk U.S. lives, not to permit collateral damage, not to bomb during Ramadan, etc.).”

The U.S. rulers need to get public opinion used to sustaining U.S. casualties and confronting resistance from a tenacious enemy—used to the kind of wars they will unleash again and again in coming decades. They need to train an officer corps with combat experience and self-confidence. They need blood on their hands—the blood of the GIs they send to die for the interests of the wealthy—in order to rally patriotic fervor behind their predatory aims. The White House is working hard to use the current war to make progress on these goals of the bondholders and other billionaires it represents.

Washington increasingly needs to wage more than one war at a time. Their current target is Iraq, but they are already carrying out a war drive against Iran and north Korea. Other countries, including revolutionary Cuba, are in their crosshairs, too.

The imperialist rulers will continue to drag working people into such wars until workers and farmers take that power out of their hands. We need to study and gain an understanding of how imperialism works and absorb the lessons of the modern workers movement in order to chart the only effective course to end imperialism, its wars, and its philosophy of plunder: make a revolution, take the power out of the hands of the warmongers, and build a socialist society based on human solidarity.

Defend affirmative action!

Defend, and fight to expand, affirmative action—enforced by quotas—in employment, housing, and education! That needs to become a rallying cry of the labor movement, as the livelihoods of working people and the potential for our class unity are threatened by a deepening economic depression. That’s why the April 1 mass mobilization in Washington, D.C., was so important.

The thousands who rallied in the U.S. capital set an example of how to defend this important gain. More such mobilizations are needed. Equally important is the need to vigorously join the debate and patiently explain why affirmative action is vital for the working class.

Affirmative action, now under attack in two cases before the Supreme Court involving the University of Michigan admissions policy, is not about “diversity.” Nor is it about rectifying the discrimination of yesterday. It is a weapon in the struggle against racist and sex discrimination today. It is a class question—part of the fight to strengthen the working class as a whole.

Opponents of affirmative action argue for “race-neutral” admissions. There is no such thing. University officials have long used all kinds of special preferences in admitting students. Students whose parents have special connections with the administration, for example, or whose relatives have attended the college, are given the inside track. The same is true for those who went to high schools offering advanced-placement classes. A higher proportion of children from the wealthy classes attend these schools. Far from being “race-neutral,” such formal and informal selection schemes, operating day-in and day-out as an integral part of the lawful workings of the market system, perpetuate the racist status quo. That is one reason affirmative action is needed today.

Despite what U.S. president George Bush argues in supporting the challenge to the University of Michigan policies, segregation is not a thing of the past. A recent study by Harvard University’s Civil Rights Project shows that despite gains won through the civil rights battles, Black and Latino students face more school segregation today than they did in 1970. They are subjected to second-class educational facilities such as greater school overcrowding and lack of textbooks and other resources.

Racist discrimination is institutionalized in every aspect of capitalist society, which constantly reproduces and reinforces inequalities. In the economy, for example, it’s not affirmative action that “divides,” or promotes “reverse discrimination,” as its opponents assert. It is the capitalists who divide. They are the ones who ben-

efit from maintaining Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, as well as women, in a second-class status. Bosses profit from paying them less and keeping workers pitted against each other. Many workers today are better able to grasp aspects of the political economy of discrimination—that discrimination does not mean an extra buck for some workers at the expense of women, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, or other immigrants; instead, it drags the whole class down in terms of real wages and job conditions, and saps our collective capacity to fight against the bosses. Look at what has happened in the meatpacking industry, for example, over the last 20 years. Discrimination against Latinos and other immigrant workers, who now predominate in much of the workforce, has been central to the bosses’s ability to slash average wages for all meat packers nationwide.

Affirmative action is under attack both by its avowed enemies and by capitalist politicians seeking to gut it with the argument, “mend it, don’t end it.” These are code words coined by former president William Clinton. In plain English, they mean: oppose quotas.

The employers, landlords, or school authorities have never, and will never, take the necessary measures to fix racist and sexist inequalities out of the kindness of their hearts. They had to be forced to take action in the past, and must be forced to do so now. That’s why the only way to enforce affirmative action is through quotas. Without quotas such programs are toothless.

Like all other social gains, affirmative action was not a gift from liberal politicians—from John F. Kennedy to Lyndon Johnson. It was fought for and won by a mass proletarian movement in the titanic battles of the civil rights revolution. Over the past three decades, workers, farmers, and students have continued to resist attempts to undermine it. No matter how much they hate it, the employers and their government can’t simply take affirmative action away without a fight

Along with union battles, like the strike by meat packers at Tyson Foods in Wisconsin, the April 1 march provides confirmation that many working people are not willing to subordinate their struggles to “homeland defense” or “national unity.” This is the beginning of resistance to imperialism and its wars by the working class. A class that faces a war at home as the wealthy rulers prosecute *their* war against our brothers and sisters in the Middle East. That’s why defending affirmative action is, objectively, part of the fight to end the system of imperialism once and for all.

Veteran socialist Peggy Brundy dies

BY NORTON SANDLER

Peggy Brundy, a nearly 40-year member and supporter of the communist movement, died in San Francisco on March 28 following a long bout with cancer. The San Francisco and Los Angeles branches of the Socialist Workers Party and the California Young Socialists will host a meeting to celebrate her life in San Francisco on Sunday, April 6.

Brundy was born in 1944 in Lincoln, Nebraska, and grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Her parents were school teachers. She attended Carleton College in Minnesota beginning in 1962. Like many others of her generation, Brundy became active on the campus in defense of the Cuban Revolution, in support of the civil rights struggle, and in opposition to the expanding U.S. war on Vietnam. She joined the Young Socialist Alliance in 1964 and then became a member of the SWP after moving to Minneapolis.

Brundy carried numerous leadership responsibilities and assignments in the party. For three years beginning in 1965 she worked as a volunteer in its recently established



Peggy Brundy at the Socialist Workers Party leadership school in New York in the early 1980s.

print shop in New York. From 1968 to 1970 she was part of the secretarial and household staff of retired SWP national secretary James P. Cannon in Los Angeles.

During the party’s 1972 election campaign, Brundy traveled as a secretary and aide to presidential candidate Linda Jenness. Along with her running mate Andrew Pulley, Jenness toured the country and internationally in a campaign that helped attract many youth to joining the Young Socialist Alliance.

Brundy then returned to New York and joined the office of Pathfinder Press, serving on its editorial, business, and promotions staff for five years.

Following the onset of the first worldwide capitalist recession since World War II, and the rise in working-class resistance to the takeback demands of the bosses, the SWP decided in 1978 to launch a turn to the industrial unions. The objective was to organize a big majority of the party membership and leadership to get jobs in basic industry and become active union members.

Brundy served as one of several regional field organizers for the SWP during those years, with responsibility for collaborating with branches and members of industrial trade union fractions of the party in Detroit, Toledo, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Indianapolis.

Brundy served as circulation director for the *Militant* in 1983–84. She was elected to the party’s Control Commission in 1975 and the following year delegates to the SWP convention voted her onto the party’s National Committee. She remained a member of the body until 1985.

Brundy resigned from party membership in Los Angeles, remaining a supporter of the party and its campaigns. She moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1990s.

In 1998 supporters of the Socialist Workers Party took on the challenge of converting Pathfinder’s arsenal of 350-plus titles from outmoded plate and film to modern digital technology. The campaign was named the Pathfinder Reprint Project. Brundy jumped into this activity, serving on the steering committee of the project for almost four years until failing health forced her to step down.

Brundy gave a talk on the project at an Active Workers Conference sponsored by the SWP and Young Socialists in Pittsburgh in the summer of 1998. “Everything that supporters have done is possible because of the class struggle and how the party is responding to it,” she said. “We want to keep the books in print, and free up party members to talk to workers.”

Anyone wishing to send a message to the meeting to celebrate Peggy Brundy’s life can do so by contacting the San Francisco SWP (sfswp@hotmail.com).

Meeting to Celebrate the Life of Peggy Brundy

Sunday April 6

**New College Center, 766 Valencia St. (at 18th St.)
San Francisco, CA**

Reception 1:00 p.m., Program 2:00p.m.

For more information call: (415) 584-2135

U.S. war on Iraq

Continued from Page 7

greet the allies as liberators.” The paper noted that “Allied leaders were quick to blame the failure of Basra’s Shia majority to revolt on the memory of their abandonment during their 1991 insurrection. This must be part of the reason. But there is a disquieting possibility that years of UN economic sanctions on Iraq, maintained at US and UK behest, have embittered Iraqi Shia. Faced with invasion, many of them may now feel Iraqis first, and Shia second.”

House-to-house sweeps

To deal with the persistent guerrilla harassment and ambushes in southern cities and towns, U.S. and British commanders have adjusted their tactics. They slowed their plans to assault Baghdad in order to allow thinly-stretched logistics troops to restockpile supplies and to divert some troops to the task of crushing the fedayeen paramilitary forces and other resistance.

U.S. troops have encircled Najaf, a city of 560,000 in central Iraq, and will be sent in for a “block-by-block assault” on paramilitary forces in the city, U.S. officers said. British troops have tightened a cordon around Basra and engaged in small arms fire with Iraqi combatants, with U.S. warplanes launching missiles on targets inside the city.

Special Forces and Marines were deployed to Nasiriyah, which is on the vital supply route to Baghdad. *Washington Post* correspondent Jonathan Finan described the detentions of civilians and house-to-house sweeps of farmers’ homes by U.S. Marines in that city. “There are no enemy tanks or infantry formations, just houses—most of them with no electricity or running water—and people in civilian clothes, some looking on with open hostility, others with friendliness that may be feigned,” he wrote.

With the invasion force temporarily stretched, the Pentagon is sending 100,000 additional troops to Iraq, including members of the 4th Infantry Division. U.S. officials insist these units had already been scheduled for deployment to the region, but were sent earlier than originally planned. The 4th Infantry, reportedly the Army’s most technologically advanced division, floated for weeks off Turkey’s coast as Washington tried unsuccessfully to pressure Ankara to allow the troops to disembark and use Turkish territory for invading Iraq. This 30,000-strong division is now on its way to the Arab-Persian Gulf and will not be operational inside Iraq until the end of April.

In northern Iraq, 1,000 U.S. Rangers and other army paratroopers stationed in Italy were parachuted into Kurdish-controlled areas. Their goal is to secure the oil-rich area and open a second, limited front against Baghdad. It is the first substantial deployment of U.S. forces in the area.

Debate over war strategy

The unfolding of the war has intensified a debate on strategy within U.S. ruling circles. In a widely quoted interview in the March 27 *Washington Post*, Lt. Gen. William Wallace, the U.S. army’s senior ground commander in Iraq, said that overextended supply lines and resistance by irregular combat forces had increased the likelihood of a longer war than the Pentagon had expected.

“The enemy we’re fighting is different from the one we’d war-gamed against,” Wallace said. He and other commanders pointed to the challenges they faced in Iraq—guerrilla harassment of supply lines, the prospect of street fighting in the cities, and the tenacity of Republican Guards.

Responding to Wallace’s comments,

White House officials defended the current war plan, declaring it to be “on track.”

In another widely quoted article that appeared in the April 7 *New Yorker*, Seymour Hersh, a liberal critic of the Bush administration, wrote that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld had repeatedly rejected advice from Pentagon planners that substantially more troops and equipment would be needed to fight the war on Iraq.

Rumsfeld “insisted that a smaller, faster-moving attack force, combined with overwhelming air power, would suffice,” Hersh wrote, adding that the defense secretary was contemptuous of many of the top generals promoted during the Clinton administration, especially “the Army, with its insistence on maintaining costly mechanized divisions.” Rumsfeld is known for his close ties to U.S. Special Forces, which have played a key role in the initial phase of the war. Hersh also claimed that Gen. Thomas Franks, the head of the U.S. Central Command, had argued that the war should be delayed until the 4th Infantry troops (waiting off the Turkish coast) could be brought in by another route and that Rumsfeld overruled him. Franks, who has publicly defended Rumsfeld’s course, has denied this claim.

Hersh said the U.S. military was divided between those who argued “that the war plan was dangerously thin on troops and matériel” and those supporting Rumsfeld.

A March 31 *Wall Street Journal* article quoted unnamed “senior military officials” arguing for “a delay of several weeks in ground advances toward the capital while attack planes bomb Republican Guard units or the armored division originally intended for Turkey—the Army’s Fourth Infantry Division—arrives in Iraq.”

This view is held by a number of current and retired U.S. military officers, such as Gen. Barry McCaffrey, who commanded Army troops in the Gulf War. In that military operation, Washington deployed a force almost twice as large as the current one. The U.S.-led war in 1991 began with a six-week intensive bombing campaign on Iraq before a ground invasion. Advocates of the so-called Powell Doctrine, named after Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War, argue that Washington should conduct a war only if it deploys overwhelming military force in order to minimize the political price of U.S. casualties.

In remarks to reporters March 30, Rumsfeld defended the current war strategy, contrasting it favorably to the “long air war” of 1990-91.

Defenders of the “Rumsfeld Doctrine,” applied in the current war, seek to “transform the way in which America fights its enemies in the 21st century,” the *Financial Times* noted. Their aim is to turn the U.S. military “into a lighter, faster-moving fighting force, more reliant on technology, and to confront a Pentagon culture that had become risk-averse since Vietnam.”

As the military offensive escalates, the U.S. rulers are stepping up their propaganda campaign to win public acceptance for their war course. In the first week of the war, U.S. officials and the big-business press played up the capture of U.S. troops, trying to depict Iraqi forces as “war criminals” for showing captured and dead enemy soldiers on TV.

After a taxi used as a bomb exploded at a military checkpoint near Najaf, killing five U.S. soldiers, officials in Washington sought to whip up patriotic, pro-war sentiment by evoking the threat of Iraqi “suicide bombers” threatening U.S. troops.

U.S. troops have since begun treating all Iraqis as suspicious. The day after the taxi bombing near Najaf, U.S. soldiers shot up a minivan with 13 Iraqi civilians, all women and children, killing 10 and wounding two. A New York *Daily News* article reports that a U.S. Army official stated, “The soldiers responded in accordance with the rules of engagement to protect themselves.”



U.S. Marines brutalize Iraqi prisoners who surrendered in Nasiriyah, March 29.

The van supposedly didn’t stop immediately after it was ordered to do so. A *Washington Post* journalist on the scene said that Capt. Ronny Johnson, who ordered the deadly shooting, tried to pass responsibility on to his soldiers for the “public relations” disaster the incident caused. After his men fired six high-explosive rounds from a 25-mm. cannon into the van, Johnson reportedly cursed at the soldiers, “You just [expletive] killed a family because you didn’t fire a warning shot soon enough!”

U.S. officials continue to claim that the Iraqi regime will use chemical weapons, although no evidence of that has been produced. When U.S. Marines first came across a chemical plant outside Najaf March 23, the big-business press was filled with allegations that it might be a facility producing chemical weapons. The story disappeared from the news within two days after reporters confirmed it was false.

As of March 31, a total of 42 U.S. GIs have been reported killed and 24 captured or missing, and 26 British soldiers have been killed. The U.S. casualties still remain much smaller than in the Gulf War, where Washington suffered 148 battle deaths.

Wrangle over ‘reconstruction’

The sharp rivalry between the major imperialist powers over control of the Mideast is the motor force of the U.S.-British war on Iraq. It has been evident most recently in the increasingly nasty dispute over who will get the spoils of “reconstruction”—both lucrative construction contracts and the oil.

British capitalists are furious that Washington has decided to award all initial construction contracts in an occupied Iraq to “a shortlist of U.S. firms,” the *Financial Times* reported. British companies are also concerned about Washington icing them out of the oil industry as well. One of the top U.S. contenders for contracts is Bechtel. The reconstruction bonanza is expected to bring in a haul up to \$100 billion.

“We have a long history in the region and would hope to be invited back,” whined a spokesperson for a British company that hopes to get in on rebuilding the port of Basra, now under siege by British troops.

London has also complained that the Bush administration has handed a \$4.8 million contract to a U.S. company for the running of the port of Umm Qasr. British officials are arguing that the port should be run by Iraqis because “they do not want to seem imperialist invaders,” the London *Guardian* stated. Breaking the stranglehold by their U.S. rivals seems to be a more likely motivation. The British big-business daily noted with indignation that the company getting the juicy contract, Stevedoring Services of America, is a Seattle-based company. It played a notorious union-busting role in last year’s contract battle by U.S.

West Coast dock workers.

Trying to edge its way toward the trough, the French government has spearheaded a call for the occupation regime to be run under the auspices of the United Nations. Paris is the imperialist power that is being dealt the biggest blows in the current war. French imperialism faces losing the privileged commercial relations it maintained with Baghdad over the past decade.

Likewise, in a March 28 editorial, the *Financial Times* called on UK prime minister Anthony Blair to demand that a UN role in the occupation is “nonnegotiable.”

White House officials have largely dismissed these demands. Washington has announced plans to establish a U.S.-run military occupation regime in Iraq after overthrowing the Hussein regime. Despite the talk of freedom and democracy as a motive for invading Iraq, U.S. officials have said they intend to impose martial law on this country of 24 million. They are trying to justify this partly by pointing to Iraqi groups hostile to Hussein’s regime that have now taken up arms against the invaders. Al Dawa, a Shiite group that operated underground in southern Iraq, for example, had been included by the Bush administration “among the opposition groups that would control postwar Iraq,” Hersh wrote in the April 7 *New Yorker* article. Al Dawa and other armed Iraqi groups, however, are now actively opposing the U.S. invasion.

Striking the only discordant note among top U.S. government officials, Secretary of State Colin Powell echoed Blair’s calls for using the United Nations. The UN is needed to provide “international legitimacy” to the occupation, Powell said. It would serve as a “chapeau”—the French word for hat—to provide cover for Washington’s aims, he remarked.

Meanwhile, the war has also sharpened tensions throughout the region. U.S. missiles have already hit Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran, sparking protests by the governments of those countries. While the bombings may have been accidental, they underscore Washington’s conflicts with those governments.

On March 28, Rumsfeld accused the governments of Syria and Iran of “interfering” with the U.S.-led war on Iraq. He claimed Syria was transferring night-vision goggles and other military equipment to Baghdad. The U.S. war secretary warned that Washington considered “such trafficking as hostile acts,” suggesting the threat of a military attack on that country.

Rumsfeld accused Tehran of backing an Iran-based guerrilla group fighting the Baghdad regime. Iranian officials rejected the charges and protested the landing of U.S. missiles in the their country. Iran, along with Iraq and north Korea, is targeted as a point on Washington’s “axis of evil.”



Vancouver college employees strike

BY CHRISTIAN PISTOR AND BEVERLY BERNARDO
VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Hundreds of members of two striking locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and their supporters rallied at the gates of the University of British Columbia here March 12–14 to protest government strikebreaking. Teaching assistants and library and clerical workers, who are on strike, were joined by food service, bookstore, and other employees in condemning the University of British Columbia Services Continuation Act.

“With this trampling of labor and human rights, what will be next? Will freedom of speech be next?” said Barry O’Neill, presi-

dent of the public employees union (CUPE) in British Columbia. The act, which is known as Bill 21, was passed by the provincial government March 12. It orders strikers back to work, prohibiting any strike action on the campus until March 31. Both student and faculty associations have stated their opposition to the back-to-work law.

Some motorists entering the campus expressed anger at the protesters for slowing traffic. In one case, a car struck and injured two women, both of whom were hospitalized.

Teaching assistants, commonly known as TAs, began their walkout February 10 in support of their fight for increased incomes. They are members of CUPE Local

2278. Library and clerical workers in Local 2950 joined the action March 7.

The Public Sector Employees Council, which negotiated between the union and the university, announced in the fall of last year that its guidelines did not permit it to give the assistants a raise.

In January the university unsuccessfully attempted to divide them by offering a tuition waiver to assistants with PhDs and not to those studying for their Master’s degrees. The demand for an across-the-board waiver, rather than a selective one, is central to their strike, explain the TAs. A waiver would offset a university fee hike of 16 percent for graduate students.

The university administration claims that being a TA is “just another job” and the question of tuition fees should be removed from the union contract. The assistants explain that enrollment is a condition of employment, and that many get their tuition fees deducted directly from their monthly salary, leaving them with little to live on.

The university also wants to end its contributions to employees’ health-care benefits.

The first day of the strike, the teachers put up picket lines at the university gates to stop buses from reaching the campus. In addition to withdrawing from teaching and marking exams, they have picketed one or two buildings at the UBC campus each day.

“At our meeting last night a union leader told us we’ve been effective—that was the feeling of everyone present—but they still haven’t addressed the key issues so we’ll keep up the escalating job actions,” said Chris, a chemistry teaching assistant.

The university administration called the strike-breaking legislation “a positive step for students” trying to complete the academic year, the campus newspaper reported.

Many students are worried about the consequences a prolonged strike could have as the end of the semester grows near. Some student associations, however, including the Coalition Against War, have endorsed the teaching assistants’ efforts and urged students not to cross picket lines. The faculty association also declared its support, but left the decision of whether to cross picket lines up to individual professors.

The teaching assistants’ fight comes at a time of workers’ resistance to government efforts to privatize public services such as education and health care.

The three CUPE locals at the university placed an ad in the March 23 *Vancouver Province* explaining the issues in their fight and their opposition to the drive to privatize education. At the same time, 750 clerical workers at Simon Fraser University, members of CUPE Local 3338, were poised to walk out over wages and benefits March 24.

Palestinian framed up for ‘terrorism’ is moved to U.S. jail farther from home

BY JOHN BENSON
TAMPA, Florida—Sami Al-Arian, a defender of the Palestinian national liberation fight jailed on “conspiracy” charges, has been transferred to a jail in Sumter County, 75 miles north of Tampa. Also transferred were Sameeh Hammoudeh, Hatem Naji Fariz, and Ghassan Zayed Ballut. Like Al-Arian, these outspoken supporters of the Palestinian struggle were arrested on February 20.

Al-Arian’s arrest was the latest development in almost a decade of police surveillance and harassment. In September 2001 the administration at the University of South Florida (USF), where he taught, suspended him. This and his subsequent arrest and firing have sparked a series of protests. His fight has won the support of the campus chapter of the United Faculty of Florida, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Tampa.

The federal indictment under which Al-Arian and the others were arrested was announced by Attorney General John Ashcroft at a press conference in Washington. The 50-count indictment accuses him of being the North American leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organization.

The authorities gave no explanation for the March 27 transfer, said Al-Arian’s attorney, Nicholas Matassini. “They came this morning and picked them up and moved,” he said. Matassini plans to file a motion that the defendants in the case be returned to Tampa. The transfer makes preparation of the defense more difficult, he said.

Nahla Al-Arian, the wife of Sami Al-Arian, said, “they continue to make us suffer more and more, but that has only made us more determined to fight this political oppression. I call on all Americans to continue this fight with us.”

The transfers came two days after the conclusion of the bail hearing for the four defendants. At the four-day hearing, de-



Framed-up Palestinian professor Sami Al-Arian

tently explained the Palestinian cause. One witness said that the USF professor had supported George Bush in the 2000 presidential election, believing Bush would oppose the imprisonment of people under secret evidence. Al-Arian’s brother-in-law, Mazen Al-Najjar, was held for three-and-a-half years without charges on secret evidence and has recently been deported.

Arguing against bail, Assistant U.S. Attorney Walter Furr told the court that the four supporters of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination are “brain trusts” for a “gigantic terrorist organization” that is “responsible for 100 murders in Israel and its territories.”

Washington intends to keep Al-Arian behind bars regardless of the outcome of the bond hearing, reported the *Miami Herald* on March 26, noting that federal immigration police “have placed detainees on Al-Arian and the other defendants so that even if they are granted bond, they would remain in detention.”

fense attorneys called numerous character witnesses who testified that the defendants were neither a danger to the community nor a flight risk.

Other witnesses testified that Al-Arian pa-

Pittsburgh march condemns killings by cops

BY MARTY RESSLER
PITTSBURGH—Nearly 200 people marched on downtown here March 22 to protest police violence. The crowd had a strong presence of young people, many of whom had participated in recent protests against the war on Iraq. Two days earlier 122 people had been arrested at the tail end of an antiwar action.

The protest was organized by People Against Police Violence (PAPV), which was formed in January amid rising condemnation of a series of cop killings of Blacks in Pittsburgh. The victims of these shootings included Michael Hunter, Bernard Rogers, and Charles Dixon, all killed since September. The death of Damian Jordan while in police custody in 1999 has also come to light.

People from Uniontown, Pennsylvania, who have been protesting the killing of 12-year-old Michael Ellerbe on Christmas Eve, joined the demonstration.

Members of Ellerbe’s family, and of the families of Rogers and Dixon, addressed the crowd.

PAPV founder Renee Wilson kicked off the march by outlining the facts in all the cases. “We are here to say no!” she said. “We will not tolerate police that are criminals and hide behind the badge. . . we march because the court refuses to hold them accountable for their crimes. We march because they still have guns and their jobs.”

Oliver Montgomery of the Penn Hills NAACP, told the story of his uncle who was shot in the back by a cop, while his



Some 200 people marched in Pittsburgh March 22 against police brutality

hands were up against a wall, 60 years ago. “What has changed in 60 years?” he asked.

Joyce Rogers, mother of Bernard Rogers who was shot to death by the Housing Authority cops on November 15, thanked the crowd.

On March 13, County Coroner Cyril Wecht recommended that homicide charges be filed against police officer Tonyea Curry, who shot Bernard Rogers. Eyewitnesses said that Rogers received the fatal bullets as he fled down a flight of stairs.

The shooting had no “legal basis,” said

Wecht. “Mr. Rogers did not have any weapon on him. There were no drugs on him,” he added, contradicting the assertions of police, who said the 26-year-old was in possession of a packet of marijuana.

The case is now in the hands of the district attorney, who will decide whether or not to file charges. The killing is also the subject of a federal civil rights inquiry.

Marty Ressler is a meat packer and member of UFCW Local 23.

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